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**TELECOMMUTING DURING A CRISIS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGER-
EMPLOYEE TRUST FROM THE MANAGERS' POINT OF VIEW**

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of this study is to shed light into how manager-employee trust is developed during a situation of telecommuting under crisis. The paper aims to describe how managers of organizations have experienced the development of trust relationship between them and their employees and what factors affect the development of this relationship. The situation that this research uses as a viewpoint is the unique situation of coronavirus (Covid-19), that forced organizations to implement telecommuting as a measure to decrease the spreading of the pandemic. This situation is investigated from the manager's perspective with a processual viewpoint, and the aim is to understand how the existing manager-employee trust affects the remote crisis situation, and how the situation affects to the development of manager-employee trust. By covering this phenomenon with the focus on manager-employee trust, this paper seeks to answer the research question of "how does manager's perceived trust towards the employee develop in a remote setting during a crisis".</p> <p>The research gap is clearly present since the crisis and telecommuting research have not been combined before in a way that they would have created a coherent combination. This study contributes to the existing research by combining the two separate research fields into one from the viewpoint of manager's perceived trust towards the employee. In addition to this, there are research gaps regarding the importance of trust in both remote and crisis management that this paper seeks to fill in. The research was conducted with qualitative approach and the data was collected with six semi-structured interviews of managers that had been forced to begin remote management and crisis management of employees at the same time because of the coronavirus. The data was analysed with an abductive approach and from the findings there could be found themes and views give theoretical contribution to the existing research by providing views on how crisis and telecommuting together affect the manager-employee trust.</p> <p>The main findings of this research suggest that manager's trust towards the employees plays a crucial role in remote crisis situation. This paper suggests that the most crucial part in the development of manager-employee trust is the employee's trustworthiness, which of abilities are most present in the early stages of the relationship, while benevolence of the employee highlight after the relationship becomes stronger. Pre-crisis trust and the strength of it plays an important part in telecommuting situation and how the manager is able to balance the lack of control and how the negative effects of computer-mediated communication can be diminished. If there is a strong trust relationship during the remote work, the trust can be maintained or even increased, but however if trust has not been developed on a strong level before the telecommuting period, it may have negative effects on the trust. The crisis itself, surprisingly, may not pose such a threat for the manager-employee trust. This is the case especially in a crisis where authorities are centralized and the (middle)managers do not have decision making authority.</p> <p>Keywords Telecommuting, remote management, crisis management, manager-employee trust, organizational trust</p>			

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the starting point for this study as well as gives insight on the motives on why this study is conducted and what importance it has to the existing literature. In the latter part of this chapter, we introduce the practicalities of the research and how it is conducted and structured.

1.1 Background

A disease that started off from Wuhan, China in December 2019 creating respiratory illness to a cluster of cases, which later has been labelled as coronavirus disease (COVID-19), has become a world-wide pandemic. By the end of September 2020 there were 235 countries that in total had more than 33 million confirmed cases and more than 1 million deaths that the coronavirus has caused (who.int, 2020). Without a doubt, coronavirus ticks all the boxes that Helsloot et al., (2012, p. 5) define as “mega-crisis”: (1) it has direct, high impact globally, (2) it is difficult to contain and (3) it creates a variety of ideas on how to solve and get through it.

Crises, and especially global crises, create a huge amount of uncertainty as well as extreme sense of urgency (Helsloot et al., 2012, p. 5), stress (Rosenthal & ‘tHart, 1991) and a variety of other emotions (Pearson & Clair, 1998). The individuals that are part of the crisis and live through it, play a key role in organizational crisis (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Axa Asia and Columbia University WHO Centre for GMH (2020) list ten common stressors related to coronavirus, which are for example

- High ambiguity and uncertainty
- Overwhelming COVID-19-related information in the media
- Physical distancing and social isolation
- Change in work demands, structure and processes

The physical distancing and social isolation are highly related to the last point of the list: change in work demands structure and processes, which refers to the phenomenon of people setting up their workplaces at home. While the development of information technology had enabled organizations to communicate via technology and employees

had been given a possibility to work somewhere else than in the office, also known as telecommuting (Bailey & Kurland, 2002), the coronavirus gave a massive boost to working from home (Ackerman, 2020). According to the survey made by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) (2020) during the first two weeks of lockdown in the UK, 71% of the respondents had started working from home as a result of coronavirus pandemic. The situation has especially affected the more traditional organizations that may not have possessed a clear set of rules and customs for telecommuting and have had to develop their systems and routines of work to a more innovative and flexible (Staples, Hulland & Higgins, 1999) direction. Some organizations had already telecommuting programs, to which the change may have not been as dramatic. On the other hand, there were a lot of employees and managers that may have never worked from home had to pack up their computers and start working from a completely new environment with no physical contact to other members of the organization.

This study takes a perspective of a manager in this unusual situation, since especially for them, the simultaneous crisis management and remote management brought along new managerial challenges that had not been part of their work description. As Nichols, Hayden and Trendler (2020) summarize in their article in Harvard Business Review, before the crisis, managers may have concentrated on growth, innovation and revenue but after the crisis, managers had to make difficult decisions on operational challenges, employee shortages, supply chain issues and many more, in addition to taking care of health and safety measures – and all of this done remotely, meaning that there are only limited possibilities for face-to-face management and most of the activities and communication are done via computer-mediated communication from one's own home which affects both the manager and the employee.

From the focus of a manager, we direct our attention in this study to a one specific concept that has been seen to play a crucial role in both crisis management and remote management, but however has been on the periphery of these research areas, and this concept is *trust*. Trust has also been acknowledged in the literature and media regarding coronavirus: David De Cremer (2020) says in his opinion piece that because of sudden transition to remotely managing employees, trust in the relationships have been noticed to be weaker than thought. Devine et al. (2020) on the other hand review

the early literature on coronavirus and see a distinct focus on the importance of trust between authorities, such as governments and the public.

1.2 Research gap

At the point of writing this paper, there are already a huge amount of research created related to the coronavirus. With its uniqueness and the enormous extent, various researchers from different fields all around the world have taken initiative to explore or explain the situation from specific point of view. According to some early research on coronavirus, the disease is not seen as a “regular crisis” where “things will go back to normal soon” but it is a tectonic change where things will not go back to normal, but they will change permanently (Sivan & Rabinovitch, 2020). That can be one of the reasons, it has already at this point lured so many researchers from a variety of fields to shed light into the phenomenon.

One problem with this amount of information in such a short time, is that there is no confirmation on which findings and information is relevant or reliable. Also, if we look at the trust related preliminary research on coronavirus and its effects, the themes most present in the literature are especially related to governments and the trust between them and public (e.g. Devine et al., 2020; Spalluto et al., 2020). Devine et al. (2020) find two broad concerns which of first studies how trust is affected by governmental policies and the second is the effects the actual pandemic has on governmental trust.

“Trust is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon” (Krot & Lewicka, 2012, p. 224), and it has been seen as the most important lubricant in organizations (Gambetta, 1988), which has led it to get a strong foothold in organizational sciences (Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007). The concept of trust in crisis literature is mostly visited in cases of people’s distrust in governments (Boin, Van Duin & Heyse, 2001) and other trust issues between an authority and a public. But there is only a little literature on trust in organizational crisis and especially on a microlevel concerning the relationship between manager and employee (Mishra, 1996). The neglect of acknowledging trust as an important factor in crisis management can also be seen from Arjen Boin’s edition of crisis management literature (Volume 2, 2008), including 20

widely recognized studies. All 20 studies include a total of only a few handfuls of references related to trust which none of focus on trust between organization members, more specifically the manager-employee trust.

The research around telecommuting and virtual work in general is quite scattered and there are multiple perspectives as well as different definitions and theories built around the topic (Allen, Golden, Shockley, 2015). Virtual work in general has three distinct research clusters: telecommuting, virtual teams, and computer-mediated work which all focus on different aspects of virtual work (Raghuram, Hill, Gibbs & Maruping, 2019). Telecommuting as a research area of virtual work fits best with the research problem of this study, because it focuses on the context of office versus non-office (Raghuram et al., 2019). In addition to this, the research around the outcomes of telecommuting and virtual work is extremely contradictory. Other research suggests that telecommuting has more positive than negative impacts regarding for example autonomy, family-work relationship, and performance (Pyöriä, Saari & Ojala, 2016). Cascio (2000) on the other hand points out possible disadvantages of virtual workplaces, such as feelings of isolation and trust issues. Research suggests that there are mediators, such as the extent of telework as well as work-family conflict and quality of social relationships that affect the outcomes of telecommuting for an individual (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Our research gap deepens since even though telecommuting has gained more and more researchers to study this phenomenon, the focus point has widely been on the individual employees and their experiences, and the managers side has not been brought up in the research as much (Lautsch, Kossek, & Eaton, 2009). When we look closer on the research on manager's perspective of telecommuting, we can also see a lack of research on trust related issues. However, there are some research areas of virtual work, such as global team and virtual team research areas address this topic rather frequently (e.g. Järvenpää & Leidner, 1999). This helps us with identifying the theoretical framework for the remote work, since we are able to combine the wide research on telecommuting with the dimensions of trust in other virtual work research.

As a conclusion for the research gap and the main point of it is that while crisis and telecommuting research individually shows gaps that need looking into, there is no

previous literature combining remote work and crisis situation. These fields of research have to great extent been kept completely separated, until now when the real-life situation has combined them unexpectedly. Some fields of disaster management literature acknowledge the remote aspect of managing a disaster but other than that, this situation has opened up a completely new research area to be examined. Due to this, one goal for this study is to combine the research around crisis and crisis management to remote work and find a theoretical framework from previous literature that illustrates and explains the situation this paper studies. As the combining element that we are using in our whole research is the trust relationship between a manager and an employee.

1.3 Goal of the research and research problems

The goal of this research is to understand the challenges and possibilities of a manager related to trust between them and their employees in a telecommuting relationship during a crisis. So, first of all, the perspective we are taking, is the manager and its perceptions. Secondly, we want to focus our attention to the trust relationships they have with their employees and how it has developed over the crisis response and remote work. The type of trust we are focusing on in this research is the interpersonal trust between a trustor and a trustee (Mayer et al., 1995). In our case this trust is vertical trust since we are taking the perspective of a manager and concentrate on the trust that the manager has towards the employee, also called as manager-employee trust (Krot & Lewicka 2012). Because we are not going to get the employees' experiences, we can only investigate the manager's perceptions on trust. However, manager-employee trust is highly related to employee-manager trust which is why the employees' trust towards the managers will also be discussed in this study.

The crisis caused by coronavirus has been extremely unusual and it has affected organizations' everyday operations dramatically. Neither managers nor employees had time to make changes gradually or prepare for working from home but in many cases, people started telecommuting unexpectedly and suddenly. These characteristics bring the situation a novel perspective where there might have been change resistance and lack of knowledge towards remote work as well as uncertainty and anxiety about the situation in general. Because of the novelty of the phenomenon, we cannot rely on

research regarding this current pandemic, but we can only use it to guide this study to a direction where the theoretical framework built will be applicable to this specific situation but at the same time generalizable to a broader research on crisis and remote management.

This research is motivated by the situation's novelty and relevance for the future. When the coronavirus started to fully spread in the Spring of 2020, it took over all media from newspapers to social media – how the coronavirus changed people's everyday lives could be seen everywhere. The situation was so unique for all individuals, especially regarding the remote work since it became the new normal for many people that had not worked remotely before. That is why the interest to study this specific topic came quite naturally for the researcher. Especially the challenges, the managers were facing lured our interest and after familiarizing with the news on coronavirus and the existing research on telecommuting and crisis, the theme of trust emerged.

As stated, the literature completely lacks a field that combines telecommuting research with crisis research. In addition to this, while organizational trust has been in the center of attention in organizational behavior research, both of the fields in our research have left this one of the most studied psychological phenomenon in the periphery of the research attention. The knowledge provided in this study will help to understand what kind of role manager-employee trust plays in both a crisis situation and in remote work arrangement. There still has been a lot of industries where remote work has not been promoted (Stern, 2020) and most of the people have been working in the office. This study focuses on especially these organizations that have been forced to start remote work because of the pandemic and not because of their own will, and who have not had that much of an experience on it. Even though this research is focused on remote work and coronavirus, the findings may be able to generalize to a crisis situation on a broader level, since as we are going to go through during the theoretical background, the situation studied can be linked to the previous literature on crisis and crisis management.

1.4 Research question

As Galletta (2012) points out, both the literature review and the researcher's own experiences have a crucial role in the formulation of the research questions. First research concern that emerged when coronavirus spread across the globe, was the sudden implementation of telecommuting and how it changed almost everyone's lives dramatically, which caught our attention. The uniqueness of the situation gave a huge research gap since first of all remote work has not been something that has been implemented because of an external force but it has been something that either the employee or the employer have wanted to utilize. In addition to that, the combination of crisis and remote work had rarely been combined before which meant that there was no previous theoretical knowledge on how these two affects each other on an individual or organizational level.

After familiarizing with the literature on crisis and telecommuting, we noticed quite clearly that the theory base is too wide and narrowing of research concerns needed to be done. At the same time the aspects of trust and communication seemed to be the common thread that combined the two themes together. As we explained in the research gap part, also the existing literature on especially trust had aspects that had not been fully studied or understood. That is why we chose the aspect of trust as the viewpoint and since our interest had been already focused on the manager's role in the situation, the research question was built around the trust relationship between managers and their employees and how it develops over the time of remote work during a crisis.

In this study we are taking a combination of processual and constructional perspectives on manager-employee trust. Processual perspective focuses on the development or change of a certain phenomenon, in this case manager-employee trust, and it includes a past, a present and a future (Dawson, 2014). Since interpersonal trust has been highly seen as a process that develops over time (Mayer et al., 1995) and existing literature has suggested trust to be both a cause and a consequence in crisis situation (Mishra, 1996), our study follows the processual perspective throughout the theoretical and empirical part of our study. With constructive perspective, we on the other hand examine manager-employee trust in a way that it develops through different building

blocks that the manager constructs over time. With these perspectives and research concerns in mind, the research question that this research seeks to answer is:

How does manager's perceived trust towards the employee develop in a remote setting during a crisis?

1.5 Used research methods

In general, our research question asks about certain experiences that an unusual and extraordinary situation brings in a person's life. According to Hogan, Dolan, and Donnelly (2009, p. 10) quantitative research focuses on "expected and unforeseen relationships" which are compared with each other. Qualitative research on the other hand is done when studying exceptional situations, and people (Hogan et al., p. 10) which is why this study is done qualitatively. The research uses abductive approach where we create a pre-understanding of the theory after which the data collection starts. Simultaneously with the data collection, the theoretical framework is developed based on the emerging concerns and ideas that come during the data collection.

The aim is to understand how managers have experienced the trust between them and their employees to develop during the coronavirus. In order to do this, we are using semi-structured interviews. The reason for this is that structured interviews do not allow the follow-ups and the knowledge-producing potential is not used as in semi-structured (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 21). Since the phenomenon is so exceptional there might be a need for possible follow-ups and additional questions to get the best understanding of the nature of the situation. Unstructured interviews on the other hand do not allow focusing the interview on specific themes of topics (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 21) which is why semi-structured interviews are used. The interview transcripts are then coded with the goal of finding categories that can be combined with the build theoretical framework, which then together will lead us to the answers to our research question.

We used six individual interviews of managers, all from different companies to collect the data for our research. We chose the interviewees based on a set of criteria that we will introduce more specifically in the data collection chapter. However, the main idea

was to find managers, who work from home or who have employees working from home, and thus the manager had to manage remotely. The goal was to find managers who had not worked remotely or who had not had remotely working employees to manage, at least in a regular basis. This way, we were able to get the most contrast between the situation before the crisis and during it.

Trust as a phenomenon is an abstract force between two people which makes the data collection rather challenging. However, as Kaplan et al., (2018) point out, trust plays a central role in the actions of a person. That is why we can place trust in a key role of the managers decision making and actions. After the literature review, we should then be able to identify which of the decisions and experiences are related to manager-employee trust and with the constructive perspective on trust, we can then use the managers' actions, decisions, and thoughts to develop and understanding on the trust relationship he/she obtains with the employees.

1.6 Structure of the study

To be able to answer the research question, we need to understand both crisis and telecommuting as separate phenomena and how they place trust in relation to the other concepts within the research area. Since the telecommuting was utilized because of an external force, we are not concentrating on the causes but more to the consequences of the phenomenon. From there, we are able to build the theoretical framework with a goal of finding the trust related connective factors of crisis and telecommuting literature.

This first chapter is the introduction to the study where the reader was familiarized with the topic and the research problem. Also, the research question and method of the study were introduced. The theoretical part of this study is divided into three chapters, which of first is about telecommuting. There we introduce its different definitions and descriptions after which we introduce consequences of telecommuting. After that, we focus on how trust has been presented in telecommuting research and how it is connected to the consequences of telecommuting. Lastly, in the telecommuting chapter we present theoretical knowledge on remote management and combine it with the theory on trust. The second theory chapter is the other main theme of the study, crisis.

We explain the meaning of crisis with its characteristics and the outcomes it has on an individual as well as organization. After that, similarly as in telecommuting chapter, we open up trust in crisis and last part of the chapter is about crisis management, trust in crisis management and the crisis management process, that forms the basis for our theoretical framework. Last chapter of the theory concludes the existing research into coherent entity which is the basis for our empirical part of the study.

After the theoretical point of view is built, we move on to the methods part where we explain in detail how the data was collected and analyzed. Sixth and seventh chapters include results and discussion where the results are introduced and interpreted in relation to the theory. In the last chapter we conclude the whole research with theoretical and managerial viewpoint, touch upon the limitations of the study and give suggestions for further research.

2 TELECOMMUTING

In our research, the situation we are going to study is a crisis situation where telecommuting is the biggest and probably the most dramatic response, organizations have done in order to survive the global pandemic and protect the whole society. Telecommuting as a research field is a wide entity that has grown more and more because of the development of technology and computer-mediated communication systems. This has enabled telecommuting and remote work to grow over the past decades which has also raised the new research area of remote management. First, we will touch upon the existing literature on telecommuting in general and the concept of virtual organizations after which we will focus on the consequences of telecommuting especially from the viewpoint of trust. Lastly, we will go through on the management of telecommuting and the manager's role in the trust relationship between them and their employees.

2.1 Telecommuting in general

Telecommuting meaning “working anywhere, anytime, anyplace” (Narayanan et al., 2017) emerged in the 1970's and one of the first people using the term was Jack Nilles, whose idea was to bring the work to workers rather than workers to work (Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2015; Bailey & Kurland, 2002). After that technological developments have enabled issues related to work-family balance (Allen et al. 2015), flexibility of work arrangements and real estate expenses (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) as well as commuting emissions (Kitou & Horvath, 2006) to be tackled with the possibility for teleworking (Kizza, 2007, p. 141). Terms *telecommuting*, *remote work*, *telework*, *virtual work*, *distributed work*, and other labels, have all been used in the literature as a form of working outside the office. Even though the terms overlap a lot, they tend to have different conceptualizations (Allen et al., 2015). In this study we are mainly using the terms *telecommuting*, *remote work* and *working from home* to describe a situation where a manager or/and employee are working at least part-time in a remote location, in this case home, communicating via technology mediated means.

There are a variety of fields from psychology to communication and information systems, that have contributed to the research of telecommuting creating contradictory and unclear views on especially the outcomes of telecommuting and whether it creates more positive or negative effects (Belanger & Collins, 1998). This array of research fields touching upon the phenomenon of telecommuting has created the research to spread widely (Allen et al., 2015) but the individual study bases to end up quite narrow with focused attention to a specific group of people or situation (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). However, Bailey and Kurland (2002) review telecommuting research and find some common advantages and disadvantages for telecommuters in the research field: flexibility of work schedule, commuting time-savings and ability to work uninterrupted are few of the advantages, while isolation and communication are seen as disadvantages.

Before going through the consequences of telecommuting and trust-related topics, we will introduce the research areas of working from home and virtual organizations to understand the situation under investigation. Because of the pandemic, people were encouraged or even forced to work from home and if the same instructions were applied to the whole organization, it was not telecommuting of individual people, but the whole organization turned into a virtual organization, possibly within extremely short period of time.

2.1.1 Working from home

In the research field of telecommuting, one common assumption is that the work done outside the office is done from home (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2015) which has increased over the last decades due to multiple reasons: for example, the increased accessibility in technology-mediated communication systems, the will for more flexible work arrangements and family-related reasons. While for organizations and companies, working from home is still rather new possibility, it is not a completely new phenomenon since there has been a lot of occupations working from home already decades: entrepreneurs, family daycares, home-based beauty salons and so on (Tremblay et al, 2006). What is new in working from home is that technology has given new opportunities to work flexibly from home for the ones that previously have

had to be on-site so now working out of one's home office can be a variety of occupations from sales assistants to software engineers (Bloom et al., 2015).

Working from home has aspects in it that lure researchers from multiple areas of expertise from economists to geographers. According to Felstead and Jewson (2000, p. 4) one of the most interesting aspects of working from home is that it combines two different worlds together: home and work in the same location. While previously these two worlds have been completely separated, now the barriers between work and home may not be as clear anymore. Other aspects that have interested researchers to this topic are the potential advantages working from home may bring to both the telecommuter and the employers. At the same time also the possible austere reality of many homeworkers: isolation, disadvantages compared to people working in the office and poor work conditions have been something the literature acknowledges (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, p. 4).

Even though the research areas of telecommuting and working from home are having more and more attention, still the percentages of people actually working from home are rather small. According to a study made by Eurostat (2020) there were only 5,3% of employed, 15-64-year-old, people in EU who *usually* worked from home and the percentage has stayed around the same for the last decade. Percentage of people in EU who work *sometimes* from home on the other had risen from 6,3% to 9,0% in the last 10 years. When we remove self-employed people from the statistics, the numbers drop quite dramatically with only 3,2% of people working usually and 7,9% working sometimes. Since this study focuses on members of organizations, more specifically the managers and employees and their relationship during a time period when at least some of the work has conducted from home, we especially want to focus on not self-employed people but members of organizations or teams.

While the percentage of home workers in EU in total is not that high, there are a lot of differences between countries which can be seen from the table below (Table 1) and for example the country that has the most (Finland) employees telecommuting versus country with one of the least (Romania) telecommuters have more than nine percent difference. Since the data for our empirical research will be collected from Finnish companies and Finnish people, we have to take into consideration the fact that in

Finland, telecommuting has already before the crisis been more popular than for example in EU.

Table 1. Employees working from home usually as a percentage of the total employment (aged 15-64)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU*	3,3	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,9	3,0	3,2
Finland	5,7	6,5	6,6	7,5	7,3	8,3	9,1	10,0
Romania	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,6

*27 countries, UK not included. Source: Eurostat 2020

There have been explanations on why telecommuting has not reached the popularity it has been forecasted to reach (e.g. Nilles, 1975) and the reasons are seen to related to specific job characteristics, occupation, individual traits, or organization's desire (Pyöriä et al., 2016). There are some job traits that have been seen as more suitable for telecommuting than others and these are for example personal control over one's schedule (Kraut, 1989) as well as minor need for face-to-face interactions (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). However, the attitudes and preferences of an individual seem to play a bigger role in whether telecommuting is implemented rather than sociodemographic, job traits or other external variables (Mokhtarian & Salomon, 1997). Pyöriä et al. (2016) see the same attitudinal problem in the popularity of full-time telecommuting, since according to their article, working full-time from home has been quite rare until now, because of the prejudices towards telecommuting as well as resistance to change. As we will see later, managers' resistance because of the loss of control and lack of trust may be one reason to not utilizing telecommuting in an organization.

2.1.2 Virtual organization

While telecommuting and working from home are possibilities organizations have started to give mainly because of the needs and desires of employees, many companies have started to see the opportunity to get most skilled people as employees despite location (Burrell, 2020). This phenomenon of employees working together without a common location, has also reached researchers attention and the concept of global/

virtual teams and organizations have gained a research niche of their own. Virtual teams are groups of people working together without a common physical location, but all communication and co-operation happens through information technologies (Levasseur, 2012), while virtual organizations are bigger entities that may include smaller virtual teams. Even though virtual organizations have grown a lot in few decades, according to a study made by Govindarajan and Gupta (2001), more than 80% of the teams did not rate their performance as “highly successful” but they rated their performance inadequate. Actually, a total of 30% of the studied perceived their performance “largely unsuccessful”. We can see from existing research that virtual organizations, while gaining popularity, contain a lot of issues that leaders and managers do not necessarily have the ability or know-how to solve, and it may have fatal consequences for the whole organization and company.

Challenges of virtual organizations can roughly be separated into (1) technological problems and (2) people problems. Misalignment of goals, deficient information, and knowledge base, as well as unclear objectives of both individuals and teams are few of the common problems among virtual organizations (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2001). Nunamaker Jr., Reinig and Briggs (2009) conclude the challenges virtual teams usually face, which are listed in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. Challenges facing virtual teams (adapted from Nunamaker Jr. et al., 2009)

-	Loss of many non-verbal cues
-	Reduced mechanisms for informal conversation
-	Reduced opportunities to build friendships
-	Time zone differences
-	Complicated, unreliable technology
-	Building consensus at distance
-	Establishing shared meaning at a distance
-	Different cultures
-	Different work processes

These challenges, as we can see, have been concluded based on research on teams that have members from different countries (time zone differences) and cultures but most

of the same challenges can be adapted to domestic virtual organizations since their principle of working together without a common location is the same. The degree of cooperation may differ in a small team and a bigger organization but both of them are still working towards a common goal. As we are going to witness in the next chapter, there are a lot of similarities with the challenges of virtual teams and telecommuting in general. However, individual telecommuters may have more issues related to isolation since there might be a case where all others from the team are working on-site with only one member working from home. Remote organizations or virtual teams on the other hand, in many cases, have members in different locations when the issues related to organizational identification and social relationships may be highlighted (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram & Garud, 1999).

2.2 Consequences of telecommuting

Since the new telecommuters and virtual organizations were not initiated because of their own will, but because of an external recommendation in order to stop the spreading of a pandemic, we are not going to focus on the reasons that led to implementation of telecommuting. Instead, we shift our interest to the actual telecommuting and what effects it has on the telecommuters themselves as well as the whole organization.

Whenever working environment of an individual or an organizational change, let's say a situation when the whole organization is facing a crisis and there has to be dramatic changes made, there are consequences that Kizza (2007, pp. 142-144) categorizes to financial; social; and psychological effects. This basic assumption guides a lot of the research on telecommuting and one can say that the literature field of telecommuting is very highly related to the changes for the individual employees, managers, teams, or the whole organization. However, research shows clearly that there are incompatible consequences with telecommuting (e.g. Allen et al., 2015; Narayanan et al., 2017; Tremblay et al., 2006), which Gajendran and Harrison (2007) call as "telecommuting paradox". This telecommuting paradox by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) is the framework we are going to use to analyze the different moderators and mediators telecommuting and how they may affect the trust relationship of the manager and the employee, but that will not be utilized in the final framework of this study directly.

The framework created by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) explains how telecommuting intensity (structural moderator) as well as autonomy, work-family conflict, and relationships in the organization (psychological mediators) affect the individual outcomes of telecommuting. The framework is illustrated in the figure 1 below.

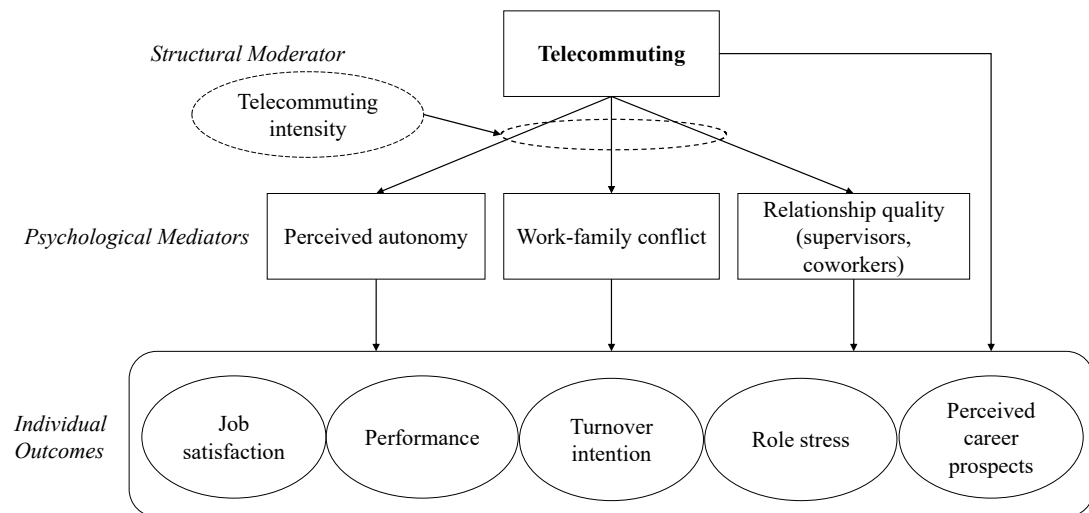


Figure 1. Consequences of telework (adapted from Gajendran and Harrison, 2007).

We can picture the consequences of telework as a waterfall where it all starts with telecommuting. As we can see from the figure, the intensity of telecommuting affects the whole structure of the system. For example, whether an employee works from home one day in a month versus four days a week, it naturally has a huge impact on the relationships with coworkers and/or supervisors as well as family-life and personal experiences (Allen et al., 2015). Job satisfaction, performance, turnover intention, role stress and perceived career prospects are some of the individual outcomes that have been built from existing literature and used in the framework (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Since our viewpoint is the managers of a telecommuters and their perceptions on the development of trust, we are going to concentrate on the psychological mediators, and see if they may have effect on the trust relationship as well as if the mediators can be managed somehow in order to gain stronger trust relationship. However, because the managers may be telecommuting too, we are introducing the actual outcomes of

telecommuting and analyze if they also have effect on the trust relationship. Now we will go through the framework (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), from down to top including other researchers' findings and views as support.

Job satisfaction is one of the most popular research topics related in telecommuting literature (Vega, Anderson & Kaplan, 2015) and in a big picture, there has been seen positive relationship between working at home and job satisfaction (Bloom et al., 2015; Golden & Veiga, 2005; Pinsonneault & Boisvert, 2001; Vega et al., 2015). This has been explained mainly with the higher freedom of adjusting one's schedule as well as decreased stress (Raghuram & Wiesenfeld, 2004) because of more peaceful working environment (Golden & Veiga, 2005). However, these benefits of working at home have been seen to be walked over by the hampering effects on relationships and feeling of isolation (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). Job performance is also one of the most important aspects related to telecommuting which lures especially the attention of employers, since they want to know whether or not to urge on telecommuting in their organization (Allen et al., 2015). Performance however has not been seen as straight forward as job satisfaction with its positive results. For example, Gajendran & Harrison (2007), found differences in telecommuters perceived job performance and supervisor's ratings on it, which suggests that the managers and employees do not necessarily see eye to eye with the work performed from home.

Changes in turnover intention and role stress have also been seen as results of telecommuting. In Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) study, turnover intentions were negatively related to telecommuting, meaning that people felt more psychologically committed and did not feel the need for quitting because of the possibility to telecommute. However, while turnover intentions may not rise because of telecommuting, rates of promotion and perceived career prospects on the other hand have been seen to get damage because of telecommuting (Bloom et al., 2015). In a study made by Bloom et al. (2015), people working from home had a reduction of 50% in rates of promotion compared to the people working in the office. In existing literature this has been explained with the physical and social isolation of telecommuters in the organization which is why they may feel difficulties in showing their high performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Allen et al. (2015) on the other hand explain this with that telecommuters may be viewed as less committed or loyal

to the organization (Allen et al., 2015) from the manager's point of view or higher up in the organization. Role stress on the other hand has been seen decreasing during telecommuting because the distress of commuting as well as fixed timetables and meetings (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

As stated earlier, the individual outcomes are not straightforward and first of all, the intensity of telecommuting has been seen to have equivocal evidence in research (Golden & Veiga, 2005) which supports the telecommuting paradox. Golden and Veiga (2005) conclude that some researchers see positive relationship between the extent to telecommute and job satisfaction since they can adjust their job activities even further and are able to create working routines. Also, the job performance might be higher because of the routines building up over time (Golden & Gajendran, 2018). The other stream of research on the other hand sees negative relationship between the extent of telecommuting and job satisfaction which stems from findings that face-to-face interaction decreases and thus leads to the deterioration of relationships in the workplace as well as overall feelings of isolation (Kurland & Cooper, 2002).

The telecommuting itself as well as the intensity of it affect downwards to the three conceptual themes: perceived autonomy, work-family conflict, and relationships in the organization, both with coworkers but also with managers (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), which we will introduce next.

2.2.1 Autonomy, work-family conflict, and relationships

The psychological mediators are the ones that can be, at least somehow, managed during the telecommuting arrangement. In this study, because we focus on the manager's perspective on the relationship, they have with their employees, we will focus most on the relationship mediator as well as the autonomy, and only introduce work-family conflict. Relationships are in the core of our research question but as we will see, the autonomy of work is also closely related to the trust aspect. Work-family conflict is not directly related to our research question which is why we will not concentrate on it.

The first mediator according to Gajendran & Harrison's (2007) framework is autonomy also called as discretion (Golden, Veiga & Simsek, 2006), which means how telecommuters perceive their authority or power to control their job tasks, methods, and timetables. Telecommuting is seen to have a positive relationship with perceived autonomy since while working at home, employees have higher freedom to arrange their work (Standen, Daniels & Lamond, 1999), which otherwise would be hindered because of interruptions or lack of the ability to concentrate in the office (Golden et al., 2006). Some individuals on the other hand may need more assistance, clarification, and direction because of for example new job description or more extensive teamwork. In this case, the perceived autonomy is not as high, and telecommuting may actually be hampering because they do not get the needed support (Golden & Veiga, 2015.)

The second theme is work-family relationships and how telecommuting has an impact on the conflict between them (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) by family interfering work (FIW) and work interfering family (WIF) (Allen et al., 2015). The work-family conflict is widely researched topic around telecommuting literature and there is an ongoing debate about whether remote work is actually good for balancing work- and family life (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Tremblay et al., 2006). The researchers that see positive relationship between these two explain it with individuals having more efficient time management (Raghuram & Wiesenfeld, 2004), higher flexibility (Pyöriä, Saari & Ojala, 2016) and thus lower family-work conflict (Cascio, 2000; Golden et al., 2016). On the contrary because of telecommuting, some researchers have found that working from home may diminish the boundaries between work and free time creating more conflict between them (Standen et al., 1999).

Third theme around telecommuting according to Gajendran and Harrison (2007) is the social aspect within the organization or team, which is the most important aspect of interest in our study. Since there is no common location between the telecommuters and their coworkers as well as supervisors, it naturally changes the engagement with the organization and interaction with others (Bartel, Wrzesniewski & Wiesenfeld, 2012). Researchers have analyzed the relationships qualities from different perspectives, which are related to for example interpersonal bonds, respect, informal communication, and social support.

First of all, the interpersonal bonds between the telecommuter and coworkers as well as supervisors may suffer because face-to-face interactions diminish and most communication is done via email or phone (Nardi & Whittaker, 2002; Golden & Veiga, 2005). Individuals that are not present in the organization may feel not only physical isolation but also social isolation (Golden & Veiga, 2005). Despite the availability of virtual communication systems (phone, video, email etc.), it may not be enough to hold on to the social integration in the organization since as Shapiro, Furst, Spreitzer, & Von Glinow (2002, p. 460) say in their article “no technology can duplicate the experience of working onsite together”. This notion will be touched more closely in the trust related subchapter. On the other hand, Bloom et al. (2015) found out that some people might be better off telecommuting because of physical isolation, meaning less face-to-face contact and thus less interruptions. This may be the case when job autonomy is high, and the individual does not need nor want that much guidance or disruptions during their work tasks.

In addition to the difficulty of maintaining strong interpersonal bonds, physical isolation that working from home creates, may have impact on how telecommuters see themselves as part of the organization. According to Bartel et al. (2012), telecommuters may not feel as respected in the organization because of the isolation physically. Likewise, other members of organizations may not value telecommuters as much because they do not see the accomplishments and presence of teleworker as clearly as others’ (Bartel et al., 2012). This diminished respect towards telecommuters however may not be present in a situation when the whole organization or team is working remotely or at least most of them, since the telecommuters feeling of social isolation may not be as strong when others are “in the same boat”.

The social relationships are closely related to informal communication, which is an important tool for many organizations to spread knowledge, supervise, socialize, and train. When this communication happens mostly during lunch hours, coffee breaks and other informal meetings and get-togethers, people working from home are not present in these situations (Golden & Veiga, 2005; Kraut, 1989). The threat here is that the people telecommuting will not get the same knowledge as the ones working in the office and not only do they miss important work-related information but also the social relationships may weaken because of it. Telecommuters may feel left outside of

decision making and information sharing and the feeling of being on the outside socially only increases. On the other hand, there is evidence that if there is already a strong relationship within the work community, technology mediated communication is enough to keep the relationship healthy and feeling of isolation will not arise (Pyöriä et al., 2016), as we will witness regarding the trust relationship.

Social support or more accurately, the lack of it, is also something, that for example Golden and Gajendran (2018) have found out to have effect on the performance and wellbeing of the telecommuter. If social support in the workplace or team is low, remote work might actually have positive impact on performance because if the atmosphere in the workplace is unsupportive and the relationships do not necessarily work, it might be good to distance oneself from the discouraging ambience.

As we have shown in this subchapter, the effects telecommuting has on the individual and the organization is mediated by a variety of different factors. This is probably the reason why telecommuting has been investigated so much from the perspective of its consequences on individual employees and why it has such unclear research evidence (Golden & Gajendran, 2018). Now we will combine the connective theme of this study, trust, with telecommuting and suggest that trust within the organization or team has an important role in how telecommuting arrangement carries off and how it may develop because of the new remote relationships.

2.3 Definition of trust and trust in telecommuting

Even though trust is extremely multidimensional in nature and the conceptualization is vague (Mishra, 1996), a general way of understanding trust as a phenomenon includes two parties, trustor and trustee and the role of risk between them (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). Mishra (1996) defines trust as follows: “Trust is one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is 1) competent, 2) open, 3) concerned, and 4) reliable.” Mayer et al. (1995) on the other hand find three factors of the trustee that create the willingness to take a risk by the trustor. This trustor’s willingness and ability is also called as the *propensity to trust*. The propensity of the trustor has been seen to have most effect in the beginning of the relationship and it is closely related to the personalities of the trustor and the

trustee and how they fit together in the eyes of the trustor (Colquitt et al., 2007). However, according to Mayer et al. (1995) the three factors of the trustee, which are 1) ability, 2) benevolence and 3) integrity, have a more crucial role than the trustor's propensity to trust. Trustee's ability basically means what kind of abilities and competences they have in the eyes of the trustor. Benevolence on the other hand is the belief of the trustor whether the trustee does things out of good faith or if they only act on self-interest. The benevolence of a trustee has been linked to terms "loyalty, openness, caring and supportiveness" (Colquitt et al., 2007, p. 910). Last factor, integrity is related to the trustor's belief that the trustee will not only follow, but also accept the rules and customs of the organization. We are using Mayer et al.'s (1995) three-dimension definition throughout the study since it is most widely recognized classification and has been used by researchers after that to explain the trust relationships between a manager and an employee (e.g. Colquitt, Scott & LePine, 2007; Krot & Lewicka, 2012; Wells & Kipnis, 2001).

As Friedman et al. (2000) state "trust matters": trust is the glue in all organizational activities affecting positively on interpersonal relationships, communication, and cooperation (Nilles, 1998). With the risen popularity of remote work arrangements, also highlights the importance of trust between the one working from distance and the other members of the organization since the absence of physical colocation requires even more propensity to trust from the trustor and more trustworthiness from the trustee. It is quite surprising that however, the increase in the importance of trust has not gone hand in hand with the themes of the research field. As we will go through, global virtual team research touches upon trust quite a lot while telecommuting research ignores the trust aspect in the majority of the research. However, there are some researchers that take a closer look on the factor of trust in telecommuting (e.g. Kaplan et al., 2018; Schneider-Borowicz, 2003).

While telecommuting field ignores trust related issues surprisingly lot, global team and virtual team research areas address this topic rather frequently. Järvenpää and Leidner (1999) for example analyze whether computer-based communication can be used to develop trust in a global team with cross-cultural communication. Trust in global virtual teams has been characterized to develop a specific kind of trust, "swift trust" (Meyerson et al. 1996) where the cooperation is temporal, and the team works a fixed

period of time towards a common goal (Järvenpää & Leidner, 1999). However, these findings on global virtual teams in relation to trust building and development cannot be utilized in this research because the organizations have already been working face-to-face and they have already established trust relationships within the organization before the beginning of the remote work.

Research has been raising questions on whether computer-based communication is enough to build and develop relationships or is there a need for face-to-face communication. This concern is based on the view that the face-to-face communication includes such cues that cannot be transmitted or understood through digital communication media (Järvenpää & Leidner, 1999). Handy's (1995) idea of "trust needs touch" is raised by other researchers too who have studied the formation and development of trust in a remote setting (e.g. Järvenpää & Leidner, 1999; Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). To analyze the means of communication and their importance, we are going to use media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) as a basis, which will be used to analyze the computer-mediated communication in our own research.

Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) is a widely used theory on which media to use in communication based on how media characteristics and the purpose of the communication meet. The theory has also been used in telecommuting literature to for example help managers with communicating in a remote setting and also to explain the new challenges in telecommuting (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). In the model, media are situated on a scale based on how rich communication they can provide. Physical letters for example are in the bottom of the scale while face-to-face communication is situated in the very top of the scale, and different computer-mediated communication media are somewhere in-between.

Research suggests that managers can have doubts on whether the media is rich enough in a remote setting so that the communication quality does not suffer (Kaplan et al., 2018), which is why media richness theory will be included in our theoretical framework. These doubts are indeed relevant since communication media used can affect the trust relationship and communication quality. Especially emails, chats and other text form communication have been seen to complicate the development of trust

since perception of vulnerability can increase (Rocco, 1998). On the contrary, it has been seen that richer technology-mediated communication, such as video calls diminish the risk of misunderstanding (Rocco, 1998) and it can be enough to maintain or even develop trust in a remote setting (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003).

While Handy's (1995) idea that trust cannot fully be developed and maintained using only computer-mediated communication, research has brought up also contradictory views on this. Schneider-Borowicz (2003) for example found out no support on media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) in relation to trust building happening only face-to-face. According to their findings, technology and computer-mediated communication have developed over the years to a higher level on the media richness scale and there is no difference in development of trust relationship whether the communication is conducted remotely or in person. Reason for these contradictory views can be explained with the changes in communication media over the decades. Technology-mediated communication is nowadays so normal that it can also be used to build trust (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). Still, as Kurland and Egan (1999) point out, there are also huge differences in technology-mediated communication which have to be taken into consideration not to mention that the knowhow and ability to use computer-mediated communication plays crucial role in whether it can be utilized properly (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003).

One point of view to whether telecommuting arrangement can be successful and can maintain trust is Kramer's (1999) history-based trust, which will become part of the theoretical framework of our research. According to Kramer, research has shown that perceptions of the trustee's trustworthiness in the eyes of the trustor happens overtime. This means that the when the encounters and cooperation with the employee or coworker increases, and the results of these encounters are positive, the trust between them increases cumulatively (Kaplan et al., 2018). This history-based trust seems to be an acceptable view that has been used in academic research to explain successful remote work situations. As Schneider-Borowicz (2003) explain, if the organization members have been working together already a long period of time before the remote work arrangements are set up, there might already be a strong trust relationship built and the cooperation works smoothly without face-to-face contacts. On the contrary, the shorter the cooperation is before the remote work, the weaker the trust between the

manager and the employee and thus the more difficult it may be to build a strong trust relationship. However, there are contradictory views since for example Schneider-Borowicz's (2003) own findings suggested that long-time relationships did not matter on the level of trust during remote work which they explained with that telecommuting is so customized in some fields that trust building via computer-mediated communication is no problem.

As we will go through more thoroughly in the crisis chapter, trust between people enables more open and honest communication, which is in a key role during a crisis situation to lower the negative effects of information processing abilities. This same importance of information sharing, and communication has been presented in the telecommuting research. As Alexopoulos and Buckely (2013) state, trust has an essential role in information sharing and the more people have trust, the more willing they are to share knowledge. The relationship also works the other way around in a way that sharing information by communicating openly (1), honestly (2), and frequently (3), as James and Wooten (2005) identify the basis of functioning communication, creates trust between the two parties. Research points out that in a remote setting information sharing may not be as frequent or as high-quality, which may affect to the trust relationship negatively too (Allen et al., 2015) but on the other hand if there is a strong trust relationship, the information sharing does not suffer because of telecommuting (Golden & Raghuram, 2010)

2.4 Remote management

“How can I manage them if I can't see them?” (Cascio, 2000, p.59)

This is a question many leaders are asking themselves when their employees start teleworking or when they start working from home themselves. When in the late 1990s information technologies started to become more and more popular and new, more flexible work arrangements out of office started to rise, there began to be concerns on whether traditional leadership practicing is giving the necessary tools and problem-solving skills for remote management (DeRosa et al., 2004; Garcia, 2020; Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). This new, urgent need for understanding how management works without a common location, rose a new research field of e-leadership, e-management,

remote management, and more generally virtual leadership (Van Wart, 2016). Research field of remote management tries to help with identifying, understanding, and developing supervisory skills that are suitable for remote management (Cascio, 2000). It is natural that the old ways of controlling and leading employees do not work the same way, and the skills and traditions need to be revisited to suit the environment (Staples et al., 1999).

As we have addressed in earlier chapters, there are a lot of mediators and moderators regarding telework that can either help or hamper with the outcomes of telework. If we revisit the telecommuting paradox by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) these have to do with autonomy, family-work conflict, and social relationships from the employees' perspective. The research around telecommuting has acknowledged the importance of management in the adoption of telecommuting and its success. For example, in Hartman, Stoner and Arora's (1992) study, telecommuter's satisfaction correlated highly on the support and understanding of their nearest supervisors. At the same time research has found out that managers are often uncertain on how they can support, control and guide telecommuters without being in face-to-face contact (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). Literature on remote management points out that it is not only the skills and traditions around formal supervisory that need to be evolved but also for example the ways how one can enhance interpersonal relationships within the team or the organization remotely (DeRosa et al., 2004), preserve sufficient information sharing and diminish the other possible negative effects of telecommuting.

The research on remote management handles mainly two primary themes: trust and communication, which of the first is the aspect we are focusing on in our own study and which the second, communication is heavily connected to. Trust is the invisible force that affects both the employee's and the manager's actions while communication is the visible mean which is used to collaborate, share information, and build relationships.

One of the most important of all management actions in a remote setting is communication, both informal and formal one (Cascio, 2000), which is why it will be in central role of the theoretical framework. As Staples et al. (1999) state, in order to get the most out of the telecommuters, managers need to be good communicators.

Cunningham, Hazel and Hayes (2020) also point out, that even though communication is essential to leadership, its importance stands out even more in a digital environment. Avolio and Kahai (2003) explain this main challenge of remote communication, that affects the whole relationship. They point out that it is not only the managers communication that happens via information technology but also the feedback and the information from the employee. So, because the communication is digital both ways, causes it challenges for both, the employee, and the manager.

We earlier opened up the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) where in the centre are different communication media and their richness. Even though this theory itself has not been brought up in remote management literature very much, findings supporting it have been found. Van Wart (2016) says a “good” remote manager can use the different information and communication technologies in a way that results in for example better performance, greater satisfaction, or diminished stress among the employees. For example, with email, the presence does not necessarily transmit since it is impossible to see the other person’s reactions, emotions, and other non-verbal communication which on the other hand for example video meetings enables. However, via email, one can give more precise instructions and attach files and so on, which would be more challenging in some other media. Kurland and Egan (1999) found out similar behavior since in their study managers used computer-mediated communication in daily, frequent work-related communication but when it came to more delicate and uncertain situations, managers wanted to speak face-to-face.

So, as a conclusion, manager needs to be able to find the right media to communicate with depending on who they are talking to and what they are trying to achieve with the communication. Kurland and Egan (1999) emphasize that managers should concentrate on visual communication means and understand that it is the quality and clarity that play the bigger roll rather than the number of messages. Schneider-Borowicz (2003) on the other hand found out in their study that the more manager was in communication with the telecommuter, the better their relationship and trust was. Communication in a remote setting can however be challenging and as said earlier, managers may not know how to communicate effectively with the telecommuter. Challenges presented in literature have to do especially with increased volume and speed of communication, expectations that the manager can handle the wide range of

communication systems and that they can use them effectively in managing employees remotely (Van Wart, 2016).

Issues related to autonomy and how employees perceive it can be also managed and it has been emphasized in existing research (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). As we previously stated with the consequences of telecommuting, if the employee perceives their job to have high autonomy, telecommuting arrangement may work better for them because of fewer interruptions and more flexible timetable. On the contrary, telecommuting may hinder the ones with lower autonomy and more task dependency since they may need more support and they have to communicate with others a lot more. Research has found out that the manager can also have a huge effect on the employees perceived autonomy by showing trust and picking the right control measures. This we will touch upon more closely in the next subchapter.

As stated in the consequences of telecommuting, social isolation and belongingness are huge issues in a telecommuting setting, which may hamper the whole team's or organization's dynamics as well as the outcomes of the telecommuter him/ herself. Telecommuters may need recognition from co-workers and the feeling of connectedness, which the manager is in a central role creating (Raghuram & Wiesenfeld, 2004). The employer should provide information and get the telecommuters feel trusted and part of the community even though they are not physically present. In Hartman et al.'s study (1992) one of the key elements, telecommuters wanted from the manager was emotional support, meaning they required acceptance and that they are valued. Simultaneously it was important for teleworkers that they were included in projects and flow of information happening in the office (Hartman et al., 1992).

One thing that remote management literature has also brought up is technology and its functionality, which is actually an issue, telecommuters may need a lot of support and assistant with (Hartman et al., 1992). Technology-related problems concern all telecommuters, but depending on the extent of telecommuting, perceived autonomy and other characteristics of remote work environment and the individuals, the extent to which support is needed may vary. To be able to use the technology properly, is in

a key element since all work and communication goes through technology-mediated systems.

So, all in all, there are a lot of new challenges facing a manager working in a remote setting. But as Avolio and Kahai (2003) point out, even though remote management has thought to be challenging, it still can be as effective and powerful as normal face-to-face management. Manager's goal is to find the right communication means to develop and maintain the quality and the frequency of the communication and, as we will in the next chapter see build trust and use the built trust to patch up the lost control because of the distance. In order to manage successfully remotely, the manager needs to understand the mediators between the telecommuter and the outcomes of it and understand how they can help with diminishing the negative outcomes.

2.4.1 Trust vs. control in remote management

As we pointed out earlier, academic research has focused on trust in the field of virtual teams and their management while the trust relationship between a manager and an employee in a telecommuting or remote work setting has been left, in many respects, unvisited. If we look more closely the manager-employee relationship, trust is one of the themes that has been brought to the center of the relationship (Nelson, 2000). In a remote setting, this manager-employee trust relationship has been, however acknowledged by some researchers, and for example Behamn et al. (2015) state that a successful telecommuting arrangement requires a good trust relationship between the manager and the employee. Manager's trust is actually said to be one of the biggest factors related to employee satisfaction during remote work arrangement (Allen et al., 2015), which is why managers must understand how the telecommuting arrangement may affect their relationship and how the trust can be maintained in a remote setting (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). In the academic literature, the concept of trust in remote setting is widely brought forward with the juxtaposition of trust and control, their balance and manager's role in it.

There is clear evidence in research that manager's trust or more concretely the lack of it affects already in the implementation of the telecommuting arrangement or program. Even though telecommuting programs are being established more and more,

researchers have pointed out that there is imbalance between the programs and the actual number of telecommuters (Kaplan et al., 2018). What makes it especially interesting is that employees would like to try working from home, but it is actually the managers that do not want to utilize this possibility, which may create tension and dissatisfaction among the employees (Kaplan et al. (2018). One reason presented for this imbalance and managers' resistance to telecommuting has been the managers' lack of trust towards the employees (Bleijenbergh, Peters, Poutsma, den Dulk, & de Ruijter, 2010). All managers do not trust employees to be as productive at home as they would be at the office which is why employees are kept on sight (Kurland & Cooper, 2002). Some on the other hand may have doubts because they do not know how they are able to communicate and control the employees from distance (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). Actually, research suggests that even the allowance of telecommuting and managers being positive about it communicate the employees that they are trusted which increases their sense of importance and satisfaction (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Research has found out that if there is distrust between a manager and an employee, the manager tends to use stronger measures of control in order to balance the distrust (Wells & Kipnis, 2001). The basic idea of controlling the employee by seeing them in action changes completely in a remote setting since when the employee is working from home, the manager is taking a completely new leap of faith in trusting that the employee is doing their job even though they are not in the office (Cascio, 2000; Kaplan et al., 2018). As Kurland and Cooper (2002) state: "If I can't see my employees, how do I know they're working?" (p. 109). Now, in the case of remote management, traditional means of control and coordination are in many ways, replaced by trust (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003), and if there is distrust towards the employee, manager may have even more difficulties since controlling becomes more challenging. Pyöriä et al. (2016) also see the new challenges related to control and trust, and according to them balancing these two is one of the key elements in the success of remote management. For some managers, maintaining the control might be the most important perceived responsibility, which is why the new arrangement may be extremely challenging for them (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram & Garud, 1999). A great remote manager is able to handle this loss of control, and this happens via trust (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003).

One way to balance the trust-control relationship that has been presented in the existing literature, is the performance measure systems the manager uses. Since the manager is not able to see the process of work, should the focus be on the outcomes of the work (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). In addition to this, as we have witnessed, employees need to feel some kind of level of autonomy when working from home, should the arrangement be based on more to the employee-manager trust relationship rather than for example than specific virtual performance measures (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). If these new, strict performance measures are being set up during telecommuting, communicates it directly to the employees the manager's the lack of trust or high need for control which hampers their relationship as well as the satisfaction of the employee greatly. If, however the manager relies on employee's trustworthiness to do the work properly, gives it the employee naturally more autonomy on their work since they can arrange their work and timetables for the most suitable way for them creating more satisfaction and possibly better performance.

Managers strong trust as trustor does not only bring positive effects to the employee but also to the manager him/herself. As Schneider-Borowicz (2003) state: "a trusting climate nurtures trust" (p. 27) meaning that the more trust there has been built before the telecommuting and the more the manager and the employee can maintain it, the stronger the trust gets. In addition to managers role as trustor, the employee must also have trust towards the manager (Pyöriä et al., 2016) which enables, as stated earlier, better information sharing and open communication. If the manager also assumes the employee to trust them, it further helps the manager to concentrate on helping and guiding the employee rather than controlling (Wiesenfeld et al., 1999).

So, all in all, trustor's ability, or willingness to trust employees play a huge role in whether the telecommuting arrangement works or is even utilized at the first place. High trust between manager and employee thus moves control measures from processes to outcomes and thus gives telecommuter greater sense of autonomy which is one of the mediators affecting to the success of telecommuting. Kaplan et al. (2018) conclude the importance of managers trust by pointing out that even though technology, employees' need and/or willingness, task autonomy, family situation and general organizational norms would support remote work arrangement, the arrangement does not work if there is no trust between the manager and the employee.

3 CRISIS SITUATION

Boin, Kofman-Bos and Overdijk (2004) conclude the meaning of crises as follows: “Crises and disasters have always been with us. Their names and dates mark eras; their impacts have changed societies and cultures. They form an integral part of history and will no doubt be a distinctive trait of our future”. Because of the continuous changes in social and business environment, crises are not anymore as exceptional situations, but they are seen more as a norm (Paraskevas, 2006) and permanent part of the world (Rais, 2007 in Vašíčková, 2019).

The implementation of telecommuting was pushed forward because of an external crisis that affected the situation giving it a stressful, uncertain, and possibly frightening nature that cannot be overlooked. Since this paper studies organizations and individuals inside them, we focus on organizational crises, that however are not self-made, but the crises initiated by external environment. First, we will characterize crises after which we will go through the responses both individuals and organizations tend to have during crises. Lastly, we will concentrate our focus to the main theme of the study, trust, that we will combine to crisis and crisis management literature.

3.1 Crisis characteristics

The term “crisis” is widely used and according to Hewitt (1983) it is used as a “catchall concept” (Boin et al., 2004) for all ‘un’-ness, meaning that crises are uncertain, unpredictable, unwanted, unexpected, and so on. All in all, the basic assumption is that crises have a nature of negativity in them (Boin et al., 2004). Merriam-Webster (“crisis,” n.d.) defines crisis as “an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; especially: one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome”.

Crises differ from one another quite a lot. There are hundreds of different crises such as economic crises, natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks and they all have their own characteristics. Crises also have different volumes: there are global crises that affect the whole society, national crises, organizational crises, and personal crises which all have different magnitude but still there are a lot of common characteristics in all crises

as mentioned in the definitions above. Crises in general have a nature of causing costs that are not only economic but also social, psychological, and political (Shrivastava, Mitroff, 1987). Because crises always have some similarities in them, there has been a possibility to investigate them systematically creating common understandings of the phenomenon and that can, within some extent, be generalized to all crises (Hermann, 1963).

Crisis always creates change in the actions, organizations or in the whole society. Actually, crisis has long been seen as a device for change (Hermann, 1963) which Gersick (1991) explains with a theory of punctuated equilibrium paradigm. In a nutshell, according to Gersick (1991), there are rather long periods of stability, which are punctuated by periods of revolutionary change. Gersick (1991) compares the paradigm to a basketball game which helps to understand the theory better. There is a basketball field with hoops and specific rules of the game. The equilibrium period is the game itself and there are two different changes that can “change the game”, which are *incremental* or *revolutionary*. Incremental changes are smaller changes in the organizations where the deep structure stays intact. In the basketball game, this means for example moving the hoops higher meaning that the players must make changes to their way of playing but the rules and idea of the game stay the same. Revolutionary change, also called as disruptive change (Nichols, Hayden, & Trendler, 2020) on the other hand means metaphorically taking the hoops away completely. This dismantles the structure of the organization and fundamental changes need to be done in order to reorganize the structure. (Gersick, 1991.)

Crisis is a revolutionary change, meaning that normal habits have to be changed in order to survive from the change. Generally, crisis has been seen as a highly negative phenomenon, but it usually has huge positive opportunities too (Mishra, 1996; Pauchant, et al., 1991). Even though crises bring a lot of negative outcomes, there might be opportunities regarding for example re-evaluation of core values, acceleration of change and power reallocation (Helsloot et al., p.8). The outcomes depend highly on the nature of the crisis, but on a smaller scale, for example within an organization, outcomes are also affected by the decisions made before, during and after the crisis.

Crises are often characterized with different phases with “before, during and after”, which supports our processual viewpoint in our research. According to Boin et al. (2004) crisis process includes incubation period, critical episode, and difficult aftermath. The incubation period contains signs and warnings about a possible future threat (Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1987), that managers should try to detect even on a daily basis (Vašíčková, 2019). Even though, the critical episode is the heart of the crisis, in many cases, it is only after the initial crisis has occurred when the negative news surfaces (Helsloot et al., 2012, p. 28). This phenomenon can also be called as the “crisis after crisis” which underlines the processual nature of crisis (Boin et al., 2004). The difficult aftermath includes, not only challenges of rebuilding and getting operations working again but also psychological distress and weaknesses that have been under the surface during steady equilibrium (Helsloot et al., 2012, p.28).

3.2 Crisis responses

Since the research question is highly related to the changes that happen during and after the crisis emerges, it is crucial to understand how different people and organizations react in a crisis situation to be able to recognize which of the situational factors are related to the crisis situation and which are tied together with the telecommuting aspect of the situation. There are a lot of different categorizations related to the responses to crisis. Hermann (1963) uses 14 propositions to explain crisis responses which he divides into direct consequences (1), stress on authority units and its transfer (2) and organizational response to transfer (3). Pearson and Clair (1998) on the other hand divide responses into two categories of individual and collective reactions and planned and ad hoc responses which lead to outcomes that are situated in a success-failure continuum. Nunamaker Jr. et al.’s model (1989) also acknowledges two categories which are individual level and organizational level responses.

In this study the basis for crisis responses is Nunamaker Jr. et al.’s (1989) model because of the clear distinction between individual and organizational responses, which will not be included in the theoretical framework as a whole but help us understand the consequences of the situation to the manager. In order to be able to answer the research question of manager’s experiences on the development of trust, this categorization helps with understanding the effects the crisis has on the

individuals, in this case the manager and possibly the employee, as well as the effects it has on a broader, organizational level. This helps us identify if the development of trust during a crisis is more affected by the individual or the organizational crisis responses or if they have an effect at all. According to Nunamaker Jr. et al. (1989), individual level responses are related to constrictions in information processing capabilities and lack of decision-making abilities. On organizational level the responses are related to for example centralization of authorities, information processing constrictions, rigidity in response and pressure for explanations and decisions. (Nunamaker Jr., Weber, & Chen, 1989.)

3.2.1 Individual level responses to crisis

“The crisis cannot be separated from the viewpoint of the one who *is* undergoing it.”
(Habermas, 1975, p. 1).

Individuals' role in organizational crises cannot be undermined (Pearson & Clair, 1998) since the emotions people feel, affect the way they act. Actions of individuals in the middle of a crisis would probably be quite different if they could just set aside the distress and anxiety about the situation and make purely rational decisions (Rosenthal & 't Hart, 1991). Tangible actions of people vary a lot even though in many cases they all may feel the same anxious feelings over the situation, but the anxiety level may affect in the responses of people. Some have the “wait-and-see” policy of just laying back and waiting information and instructions to come, or the whole crisis to pass completely. Some, usually people with higher anxiety, on the other hand take comprehensive precautionary measures, especially if the crisis is a pandemic, in order to protect themselves and their loved ones from getting the disease. (Leung et al., 2004.) Some people, especially in the early stages of crisis, show great optimism and willingness to work hard, with ability to set aside their own interests and think the greater good (Helsloot et al., 2012, p. 28).

As said earlier, crises create uncertainty, stress, and a variety of other emotions which all affect to the responses people have during a threatening crisis situation. Nunamaker Jr. et al. (1989) find two main individual response themes: first one is information processing constrictions which may lead to inferior decisions and the other is the lack

of decision readiness, which could lead to stress, routine decisions and inappropriate decision (Figure 2).

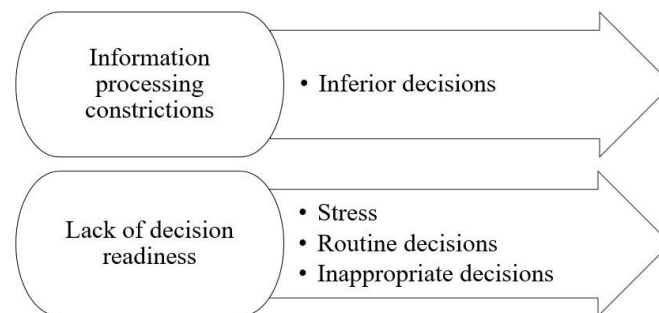


Figure 2. Individual level responses to crisis (adapted from Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989).

One of the assumptions used in cognitive approaches to organizational crises is that information-processing ability of individuals is limited (Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989; Pearson & Clair, 1998). In the case of crisis, this causes information overflow resulting possible confusion and obscurity. Because people cannot necessarily handle the information overflow in the situation, it leads to creation of cognitive shortcuts via beliefs, prior experiences, agenda, and other rules of thumb that people have created in their heads (Parker & Stern, 2002). These cognitive shortcuts and the decisions made via them may be inferior because the circumstances are novel and there might not be prior experience regarding the situation (Sivan & Rabinovitch, 2020) and this prior knowledge is exactly the base individuals tend to use while making the decisions.

The surprising and distressing aspects of crisis situation are known to have effect on decision readiness, which can also be referred to as the degree of preparedness (Smart & Vertinsky, 1977). Because the situation is completely new and there are no ready-made steps or experience handling the situation, it induces higher stress (Smart & Vertinsky, 1977) and decisions people make might be inappropriate or they are rooted from routines that make us feel safe in a novel situation (Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989). The routine-way of acting has been recognized by other researchers too (Brändström, Bynander & Hart, 2004; Rosenthal & t'Hart, 1991; Staw, Sandelands & Dutton, 1981) and we will talk about it more in the organizational responses.

For a manager, it is crucial to also manage the emotions of people so that their behavior and emotions would not harm the people themselves or the organization they are part of (Helsloot et al., 2012, p. 8). It is said that the psychological side of crisis management is actually the most difficult to implement since the emotional charge is high and the problems and issues are not that tangible (Pauchant et al., 1991). As we will notice throughout the theoretical framework of this study and previous findings, the importance of trust between a manager and an employee cannot be undermined during a crisis situation and how it may affect the manager-employee relationship as well as the whole organization.

3.2.2 Organizational level responses to crisis

During a crisis, organizations undergo a breakdown of reality, meaning that the equilibrium they are used to operating in, is punctuated heavily which leads to the need for revisitation of the most basic assumptions and routines of the organization (Pearson & Clair, 1998). There might be great, detailed crisis plans that have been created by a specific crisis planning team or the managers but, in many cases, it does not guarantee the crisis response to work (Paraskevas, 2006). As Pearson and Clair (1998) point out, in addition to implementing the possible crisis plan, organizations react to all the expected and unexpected situations that come in the way and develop responses as the crisis develops.

Research on organizations' consequences and thus responses vary depending on the viewpoint of the research as well as the organizations themselves and their nature. Nunamaker Jr. et al. (1989) find common consequences of organizational behavior in a crisis situation that are illustrated in Figure 3 below. These consequences have to do with authority centralization, information processing abilities, rigidity, conflicts, and pressure from stakeholders. As we can see from the figure, information processing constrictions do not only affect individuals, but they create organizational responses

as well. Decision-making is also affected by the crisis on an organizational level but from a bit different point of view than on the individual level (figure 2.).

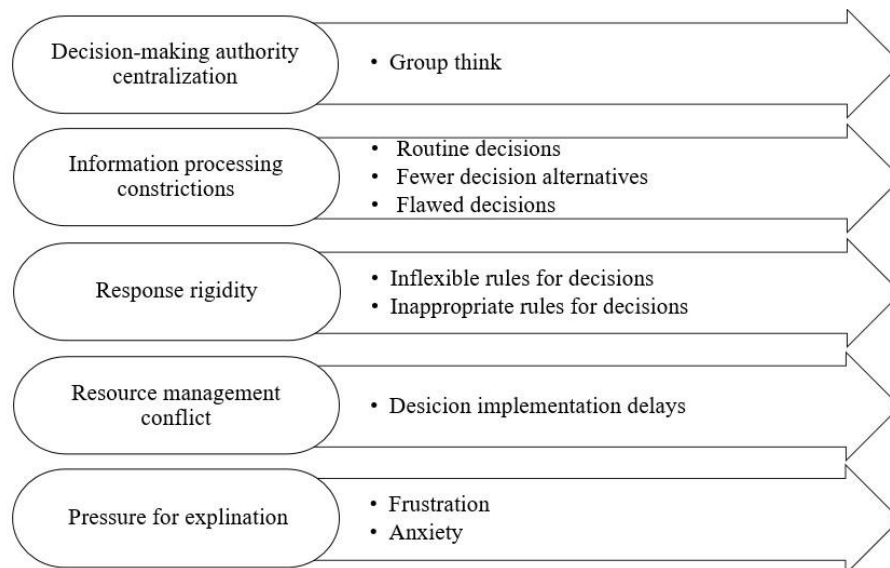


Figure 3. Organizational responses to crisis (adapted from Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989).

As shown in the figure above, centralization of authority is widely recognized response to a crisis in an organizational level. Staw, Sandelands and Dutton (1981) explain the centralization of control with tendency to behave rigidly in threatening situations which is why, control and decision-making power is moved upwards. Smart and Vertinsky (1977) on the other hand point out the conditions of crisis-induced stress which leads to limitation of decision makers. Herrman (1963) explains it with the increase in formalization. Because of the decrease in decision makers (Herrman, 1963), the decisions made tend to be more homogenous (Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989), and the small groups might be led by a strong leader (Smart & Vertinsky, 1977). This phenomenon can also be called as “*group think*” (Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989). Homogenous actions inside the organization are not necessarily a bad thing but depending on the decisions made upper in the organizational level, may the centralization enhance the success of the crisis or the contrary, be fatal to the organization.

Human information processing does not only affect individuals but also the whole organization by affecting to decision making. Staw et al. (1981) say that because of the threat, information processes are restricted, which leads to an overload of communication. Because of the overload of communication as well as the time scarcity

of the situation, organizations and managers do not have the capabilities or/nor time to weigh in different possibilities and scenarios. Instead, organizations rely heavily on prior knowledge and they tend to look back for clues about what to do and what not to do. This way, even though all crises are unique in some way, still people tend to find similar situations to help coping with the current crisis (Brändström, Bynander & Hart, 2004). These shortcuts in decision making may lead to decisions that are routine-like, flawed and/or there are not enough decision alternatives.

The information processing constrictions affect also to the rigidity of responses. Rosenthal & 't Hart (1991) explain the concept of response rigidity by saying that because individuals' rigid way of thinking, they tend to stick to one dominant scheme. This leads to that even though situations change, they have difficulties revisiting the current state of organization and making new decisions but instead they focus on the first initial thought and tend to have difficulties with flexible decision making. Rosenthal et al.'s (1991) findings are supported by Hermann's proposition (1963) that while communication channels are reduced, information load may actually increase creating the overload explained previously by Staw et al. (1981). This leads to rigid response behavior which affects organizations and managers in a way that decision making rules are inappropriate and/or inflexible for change (Nunamaker Jr. et al. 1989).

In a threatening situation, the focus on efficiency increases also, which is why resources are conserved, and this further leads to greater rigidity in organizations (Staw et al., 1981) as well as conflicts and tension between the ones needing the resources and the ones deciding on their allocation (Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989). Paraskevas (2006) studies a small-scale crisis where he sees the same problem Staw et al. (1981) and Nunamaker Jr. et al. (1989) notice: When crisis occurs, lower-level managers do not necessarily get enough flexibility to use common sense and deal with the complex situations appropriately, but the rules are made so rigid from above that the hand of lower-level managers might be tied (Paraskevas, 2006). These are the reasons why in crisis situation the control should be distributed on lower levels. But on the other hand, as Comfort (1995) emphasizes, there still needs to be a sufficient structure and information system in order to keep the process directed to the common goal.

Pressure for explanation, communication and answers in a crisis situation may be huge among the members of the organization (Nunamaker et al., 1989; Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1987). People want to know how the situation is evolving and what are the next steps in their organization. This is where authorities raise their importance because they are assumed to give guidance, answers, and decisions (Quarantelli, 1998). Taking into consideration the time scarcity of the situation, frustration and anxiety may increase extremely high among both the managers and the employees of the organization (Nunamaker Jr. et al., 1989). That is also a reason, why conflicts may increase inside an organization (Hermann, 1963).

3.3 Trust in crisis

As we have now explained, both individuals and organizations respond to crises in ways that may vary from each other. There are a lot of responses that are generally accepted in the crisis literature such as the centralization of authority, information processing constrictions and the threat-rigidity-effect. However, as Mishra (1996) points out, prior research has seen to be neglecting the “why’s” of the responses. Even though trust is one of the most studied psychological phenomena in the field of management and organizational behavior, if we look closer on the context of crisis and crisis management, the themes around trust diminish significantly compared to other fields of management and organizational behavior. However, there are few authors (Mishra, 1996; Powley & Nissen 2012; James & Wooten 2005) who believe that *trust* is actually a key element in the success of the crisis management and the nature of the crisis responses.

In the telecommuting chapter, we already introduced Mayer, Davis and Schoorman’s (1995) views on trust from their article, which is one of the cornerstones in the field and has been used extremely widely by other researchers after that. That is why we will continue to use their views on the characteristics of the trustor and the trustee in this chapter too and combine it with the crisis aspect concentrating on Mishra’s findings (1996). But as said, there are only a little literature on the relationship between crisis, crisis management and trust which emphasizes increasingly the fact that there is a gap in the research area which this study tries to give insight on.

Trust has a huge role in the success of a crisis and in crisis management, which we will touch upon later during the crisis management section. In general, crises are uncertain situations which require even more vulnerability and risk taking than in a normal situation. This vulnerability and risk taking, as came up in Mayer et al.'s (1995) and Mishra's (1996) definitions of trust, is in the core of trust relationship (Powley & Nissen, 2012), which straight connects the importance of trust in crisis situation. In existing literature, trust has been seen as both a cause and a consequence for crisis behavior (Mishra, 1996). Cause-effect can be seen in a situation, where there is a strong trust between the manager and the employee already before the crisis and positive effects will arise during the crisis response, as we will go through later in this chapter. Mishra (1996) for example points out trust as a consequence in a situation where the trust of the trustor is abused or misused, and it may have fatal effects especially for the two parties or even the whole organization. On the contrary, if employees show their trustworthiness during the crisis and they for example make great decisions, the trust will increase offering a great base for continuing the relationship after the crisis.

Both the trustor and the trustee affect the relationship and the degree of trust they have between them. As we opened up in the telecommuting chapter, according to Mayer et al. (1995) the trustors propensity to trust, which means the overall willingness and ability to trust people, as well as the trustee's trustworthiness, affect the nature of the trust between the two parties. However, we can see from the existing literature that the actions and characteristics of the trustee are in a key role in whether the trustor has the willingness to take the risk in trusting the other person. The trust that the manager has on the employee may affect, as said to the organizational crisis responses introduced earlier (Figure 3). According to Mishra's research (1996) especially the negative sides of organizational crisis responses can be diminished with trust within the organization.

As we have pointed out, risks have more magnitude during a crisis than in a normal situation which is why, the behavior might be rigid because of the threatening unknown and thus decision making is centralized (points 1 and 3 in Figure 3). However, the more the managers trust their employees, the more they are willing to let them make decision even during a crisis situation and authorities are decentralized (Mishra, 1996). Even though centralized authorities may provide unified, important

rulings that may help finding the common grounds in surviving the crisis, it is vital to involve lower levels of the organization to the decision making especially during a crisis when “dynamic, situation-specific, and urgent problems arise simultaneously at different places” (Boin & Hart, 2003).

Trust does not only help with the decentralization of authorities, but also the overload of communication as well as information processing constrictions (Figure 3, point 2), can be affected with trust between the manager and the employee. As Mishra (1996) states in his definition of trust, the trustor needs to believe the trustee to be open in order to be able to create trust between the two parties. If there is no trust between the manager and the employee, communication may easily be distorted, misleading or deceptive, creating even more confusion and misunderstanding during the crisis (Mishra, 1996). If, however, trust is strong between the two parties, the communication is open, honest, and reliable, which eases the information processing of the decision maker. Similarly, trust also helps both the employee and the manager with their individual crisis response problems with information processing constrictions and lack of decision readiness (Figure 2) since either party does not doubt the reliability or trustworthiness of the information the other gives and is able to utilize it to respond to the crisis the best possible way.

Thirdly, resource management conflicts (Figure 3, point 4) can also be eased with trust between different parties of the organization. Mishra (1996) explains that trust enhances collaboration and relying on other's knowledge which helps for example the employee to understand that managers decision regarding resource management and accept them without a doubt of misuse of authority.

As we now notice, despite the lack of consideration in crisis literature, trust may, in fact, impact the organizational crisis and its responses quite dramatically. The responsibility in the building and fostering of the trust is mostly in the manager's hands which is why we now focus our attention to the research field of crisis management and build our understanding of crisis management process and how trust relationship with the employees can be developed and utilized in crisis management.

3.4 Crisis management

Crisis management has become a widely acknowledged specific organizational practice as well as academic discipline (Vašíčková, 2019). Crisis management has been studied from single to multidisciplinary approaches with a lack of integration in the research bases which has led it to spread widely without a common thread (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Vašíčková (2019) made a review of almost a hundred crisis management literature sources collecting the main points into common features of the theory base. According to her review crisis management is generally seen as “sets of approaches, measures and methods used in situations where managerial skills are no longer sufficient” (2019).

Organizations do not usually get through crisis without some kind of urgent decision making (Boin et al., 2004). In addition to the traditional way of thinking crisis management as the reactive decision making after the crisis has occurred, modern crisis management research emphasizes highly also the proactive decisions, meaning that it is not only done after the crisis occurs but also before it, to avoid the crisis or diminish its effects in the first place (Natarajathinam et al., 2009; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Vašíčková, 2009). According to one of the most cited crisis management studies by Pearson and Clair (1998), goal of crisis management combines three objectives: (1) core operations are sustained or resumed, (2) losses are minimized from organization's or stakeholders' point of view and (3) learnings from the events can be utilized for the future.

Crisis management is not easy since usually managers do not have control over the situation and the time frame for decision making is very slim. In addition to the time scarcity, the pressure that comes from the government, public, employees and so on do not help with the challenging situation. (Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1987.) And even though precautionary measures are emphasized, it is not straightforward that the managers and organizations which have made plans for crises, will success better. In fact, the correlation between existence of crisis plans and successful crisis management is rather limited (Quarantelli, 1988). The reason for this might be that crises have a nature of suddenness and multidimensionality, which is why their exact nature is

impossible to forecast (Huhtala & Hakala, 2007, p. 16) and that is why crisis plans may be followed too blindly without seeing the real issues and problems at hand.

3.4.1 The role of trust in crisis management

As we have now indicated the vulnerability and risk related to trust highlight in times of crisis which elevates the importance of understanding how trust affects the crisis situation and how it can be managed. High versus low trust before the crisis affects the crisis response stage and decisions during the response phase may have high impact on whether the trust strengthens, stays the same or declines seriously.

Even though trust may not have been in the center of organizational crisis management literature, especially the trust within the organization between the manager and the employees (Ayoko, Ang & Parry, 2017), still there are multiple authors highlighting the human side of crisis management. As we already have noted, the human element cannot be separated from crisis responses, the same goes with crisis management. Lockwood (2005) for example points out that in many cases, managers are focusing on the operations and systems during crisis management process when actually they should focus more on the impact the stressful situation has on for example employees and their families. James and Wooten (2005) as well note the importance of the human element and that in order to develop trust, must the manager and the organization focus on the needs of the employees and not the operational side.

For the management of this human element, trust has been seen as one of the key elements in crisis management for multiple reasons. First of all, there needs to be trust between the manager and the employee in order to implement new rules and strategies related to the crisis. If the employee does not trust the manager, they will not support their decision making and if the manager does not trust the employees, he/she does not believe them to follow the new guidelines. Because of the crisis, there may be extreme changes made during the response stage and trust within the organization can enhance the implementation of new working routines and thus help the organization to adjust and develop. How employees react to the crisis and the decisions made during it affect significantly on the success of the implementation of the changes as well as other co-operational behavior not to mention trust towards the manager and the whole

organization. That is why the employees need to be understood and considered in crisis management.

In order to gain this trust, research heavily suggest trust building and obtaining as one of the activities especially before the punctuation period, which will be included in the theoretical framework. That is because if the trust is not built already before the crisis strikes, it may be extremely difficult to start building it during the crisis response stage because of the possible chaos that is part of that stage (Regester, 1989). James and Wooten (2005) also highlight the preparation period since they identify six competencies for a successful crisis management, of which the first is building a foundation of trust. According to their research, the best crisis managers first build a strong foundation of trust which can be utilized in the actual surviving of the crisis but also to enhance the positive side effects of the crisis creating sustainable change and further better organization.

Even though the trust building is recommended to be concentrated before the crisis punctuation, according to for example Lockwood (2005), one of the most important roles manager has during a crisis is to develop and sustain the trust inside the organization as well as outside it. As we will go through in the next subchapter, in crisis management process, the differences between organizations start only *after* the crisis during the crucial crisis response stage. So, that is the stage when the invisible trust relationship between the manager and the employees becomes somewhat visible for the first time and the effects can be witnessed. As James and Wooten (2005) point out, usually it is the crisis (mis)handling that leads to worse or better recovery than the crisis itself.

The second reason for the importance of concentrating on employees during the crisis management is that crisis may have fatal effects on the trust relationships within the organization. According to Ayoko et al. (2017) the relationship between the manager-employee trust and the employees' emotional reactions and responses are in line with each other, meaning that if the employee has positive emotions and reactions during the crisis, it may even further strengthen the trust between the manager and the employee. On the other hand, negative responses may endanger the built trust relationship. As Ayoko et al. (2017) point out, it is both individual and organizational

responses that affect the trust relationship. Smart and Vertinsky (1977) found out the same relationship already 40 years earlier stating that high-quality decisions increase the employees trust in the decision maker which further increases the support and respect towards these decisions. Sahin, Ulubeyli and Kazaza (2015) on the other hand explain the negative consequences on trust from ineffective crisis management. According to the authors, if the actions towards a crisis are more reactive, because of the suddenness of the crisis, or because of the neglect of crisis prevention measures, rather than proactive, it may hamper the trust relationship between the decision makers and the employees (Sahin, Ulubeyli & Kazaza 2015). According to Sahin et al. (2015) these reactive measures are usually short-term, for example closing or deduction of some departments or other shrinkages.

As we have noted, the trust before the crisis may help with diminishing the negative effects the crisis has on individual employees but also for the whole organization. In addition to that, a proper managing of crisis may strengthen the trust within the organization creating long-lasting positive effects. Research suggests the focus on trust building during the preparation stage of crisis management but actual actions to do that are very limited in existing literature. However, there are some authors that give tangible and usable tools for managers to build and maintain the important trust relationship with the employees (James & Wooten, 2005; Powley & Nissen, 2012).

James and Wooten (2005) have pointed out in their research the tight relationship between trust and communication since communication is the key element in building and maintaining trust. This same importance of communication is highlighted in a remote situation too, which is why we are taking it as part of our theoretical framework. James and Wooten (2005) define three ground principles for great crisis communication which are 1) open 2) honest and 3) frequent communication and this categorization will be also utilized in our theory base. By communicating with these three principles, the employees' trust towards the manager strengthens and vice versa. This trust also enhances the employee to communicate and share information openly which further helps the manager to handle the uncertain and stressful crisis situation (Powley & Nissen, 2012) when the information sharing is mutually strong. On the other hand, as James and Wooten (2005) note, the more one shares their information in times of crisis, the more vulnerable they are to the misconduct of trust which may

hurt them or the whole organization. This vulnerability and openness, on the other hand, is the key factor to develop a strong trust relationship.

The hierarchy of the organization has also been seen to have a mediatory effect on how crucial trust within the organization is. In Powley and Nissen's (2012) laboratory experiment, they found out that the more flexible the organization is, thus the lower hierarchy the organization has, the more effect trust has on the performance of the organization. With high trust, a flexible organization had higher performance in crisis response and crisis management. On the other hand, if a flexible organization had low trust between the members, it backfired more than in more hierarchical organization, creating more inferior performance (Powley & Nissen, 2012).

3.4.2 Crisis management process

As stated before, crises are generally seen as a process, which leads to crisis management to be understood as a process too. There are a lot of common directions and many authors demonstrate the process in a similar way, with however slightly different stages or different definitions or categorizations (Vašíčková, 2019). The most common approaches include either three, four or five stages. Three phase approach includes preparation, response, and recovery (Brecher, 1979); Huhtala & Hakala, 2007, p. 169-171; Mahauganee, 2017). Some authors on the other hand use four-stage model, where there have been added one phase, planning in the beginning of the process (Natarajarathinam et al., 2009; Altay & Green 2006). Lastly, learning, as a part of the crisis management process has been introduced by multiple authors (James & Wooten, 2005; Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1987; Mahauganee, 2017) creating a five-stage model of crisis management where the learning phase is placed at the end of the process (Mahauganee, 2017).

Differences in processes are also related to the continuity of the process and whether it is seen as circular or as a set of stages with clear beginning and ending. In today's world crises are no longer rare events that shake up the world, but they are seen as recurring and cyclical (James, Wooten & Dushek, 2011). Crisis management process models have also started to recognize this cyclicality and have added the previous ending of the crisis to the beginning of the next one (Mahauganee, 2017; Vašíčková,

2019; Mitroff, Pauchant, & Shrivastava, 1988). This means that the learnings from the previous crisis of the organization start the process of planning for the possible upcoming crisis.

In our study, we are going to use Mahauganee's (2017) crisis management model as a basis that we are further on going to use as a timeline to illustrate and explain the different stages of the crisis management. Mahauganee's model suits our goal of study since it also uses the Gersick's punctuated equilibrium paradigm (1991) which we introduced in the characteristics of crisis, where steady normal operations are punctuated by a crisis, also known as "far-from-equilibrium" conditions (Paraskevas, 2006), creating revolutionary changes in the organization. This linkage between the actual crisis and the management process is important to understand regarding this research since then we are able to examine the different phases of the crisis in relation to the manager's experiences.

In the Figure 4 below (adapted from Mahauganee, 2017), the process of crisis is combined with the crisis management process elements, using the 5-stage model of planning, preparation, response, recovery, and learning. This processual perspective of the crisis and crisis management is adopted as the basis for the theoretical framework of this research.

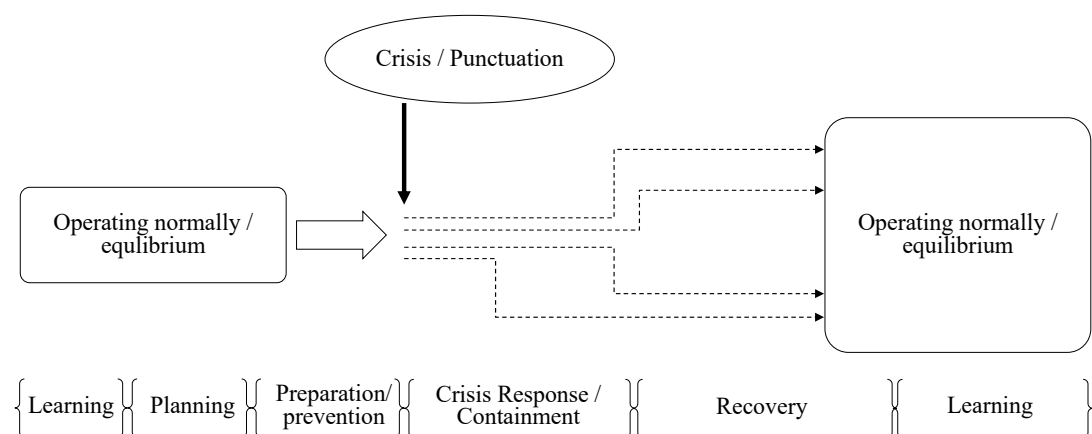


Figure 4. Punctuated equilibrium in relation to the crisis management cycle (adapted from Mahauganee, 2017)

The upper part of the figure explains the relationship between equilibrium and punctuation. As we have earlier stated, organizations' actions during the crisis differ from each other considerably and the dotted arrows in the figure represent the different ways, the organizations may go during the punctuation period. In the end, they all return back to the normal operations, just from different pathways. However, as noticed before, crises can have significant impact on the future (Boin et al., 2004) which is why the "new normal" may differ from the old one substantially.

The lower part of the figure represents the phases of crisis management and how they are situated in the development of the crisis. Before the crisis, learning, planning and preparation should be done in order to diminish the negative effects of the crisis. This means minimizing the potential risks that might arise (Pearson & Clair, 1998). The risks are not only organizational but also mental which is the plans for the "worst-case-scenario", prepare for both operational and psychological challenges that the crisis brings along (Lateef, 2020). After the crisis occurs, comes probably the most crucial stage, response, after which recovery and learning can begin. Response stage includes fast response to the emerging problems by reconstructing the actions, roles and shared meaning via improvisation and interaction with employees and other stakeholders (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Recovery phase on the other hand focuses on the readjustment of operations as well as managing the emotional and behavioral responses of employees in order to recover and find a new equilibrium (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Learning from the crisis helps to prepare for the next one and it has been emphasized by crisis management researchers, however, is still quite rarely that the crisis time is revisited and examined to learn from it. (Pauchant et al., 1991).

4 MANAGER-EMPLOYEE TRUST IN TELECOMMUTING DURING CRISIS

In this chapter we are going to conclude the theoretical background by developing the framework for our own research and thus giving the focus points for the empirical study based on the theoretical background. As this study is based on the processual viewpoint of both the crisis situation and the trust building, we formed a situational viewpoint that concludes the processual starting point for our research (figure 5).

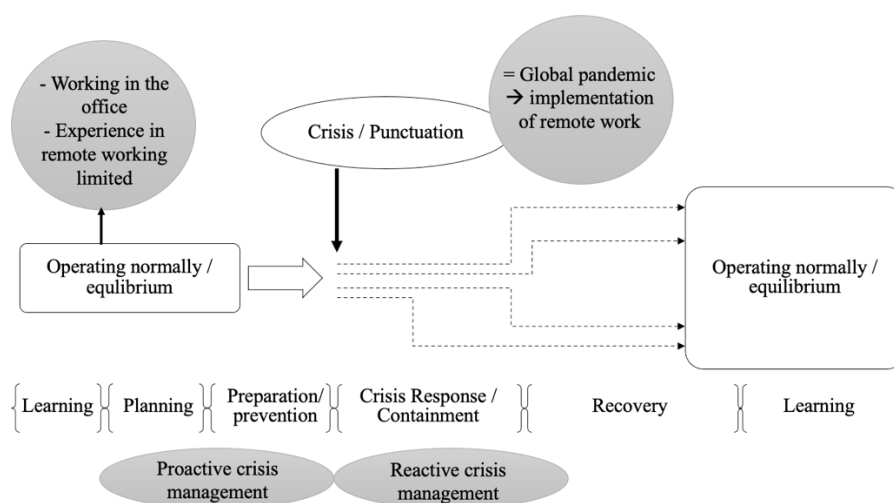


Figure 5. Crisis management process with situational factors.

In the figure 5 above, we have combined Mahauganee's (2017) punctuated equilibrium and crisis management process with the remote work in order to see the big picture of the studied situation. As we can see from the figure 5, before the crisis there are normal operations in the organization, in this case it meant routines in normal environment, such as the office. We should also remember when analyzing the situation that there may not be any experience in remote work at this point. Then comes the crisis punctuation, in this case the global pandemic, which caused organizations to respond to the crisis by implementing telecommuting. Regarding the management of the situation (lower part of the figure), we divided the management of the situation into only two categories: proactive and reactive crisis management processes. This was done because as we will go through soon, the studied trust development is mainly

focused on two periods of time: before and after the crisis punctuation which naturally steers us to examine the crisis management with the same categorization.

If we look at the figure 5 and zoom into the crisis punctuation including the periods of time just before and after it, we are able to see the situation that the theoretical framework of this study is built on. The figure 6 below is the visual representation of the process of trust development between managers and their employees under working remotely during a crisis situation, and thus the theoretical framework for our study. The figure is built based on the main chapters of the theoretical background and abductively points out the focus points for the empirical study.

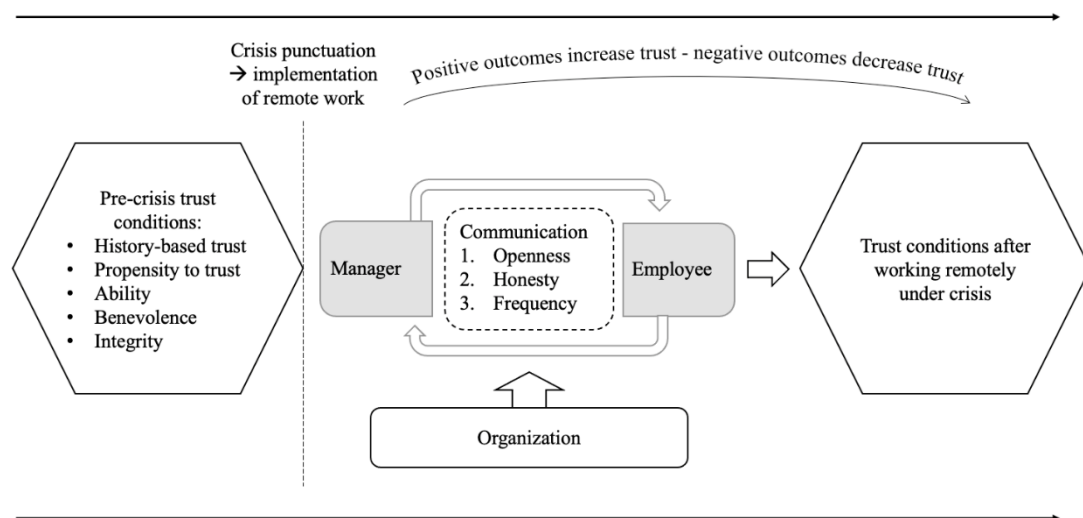


Figure 6. The development of manager-employee trust under period of working remotely under crisis.

The framework is roughly divided into two periods of time: pre-crisis time and the crisis time which are separated by the crisis punctuation, illustrated also in the figure 5 of the big picture. At this point we did not want to specify the different factors that may have influence in the development of trust from manager's perspective since we want to keep the framework open enough for interpretation of the findings in this study. That is why the framework is built to give us only the main point of interest that the theory base has given us that we can use to answer the research question.

Firstly, the pre-crisis trust conditions are the starting point of the situation which we will analyze in order to understand the nature of the relationship before the crisis. As we presented earlier, research has shown that perceptions of the trustee's trustworthiness in the eyes of the trustor happens overtime, which has been called as history-based trust (Kramer, 1999). This theory suggests that the longer the manager and employee have worked together, the more successful cooperation they have had, and thus the trust has developed to a deeper level. In addition, we are focusing on the characteristics of the trustor and the trustee since both the trustor's propensity to trust, and the trustee's trustworthiness are in the center of how the trust relationship develops. To summarize the theory on the trust relationship between two individuals is that there is always a trustor, with their propensity to trust, and a trustee with their trustworthiness. The trustor's propensity means that how willing the trustor is to trust other party.

Trustee's trustworthiness that we will use in this study is based on Mayer et al.'s (1995) categorization to three dimensions: 1) ability (also called as competence), 2) benevolence and 3) integrity. The ability is the knowledge and skills that are related to both work related issues as well as general know-how. Benevolence on the other hand means the trustor's belief on whether the trustee wants to do good for the trustor without any self-interest or motives. The third dimension, integrity means the trustor's belief that the trustee follows the moral, ethical, and official principles, that the trustor believes to be acceptable. So, regarding the pre-crisis situation, we will concentrate on finding out how strong the trust relationship by analyzing the length of the relationship and the traits of both the manager and the employee. By understanding the strength of the relationship before the crisis we can understand the effects the trust has during it.

When the punctuation to the equilibrium happens, starts the revolutionary change that puts the built trust to the test. In the core of the situation, as illustrated in the framework (figure 6) is the manager, employee, and their interactions with each other. As it came up during the crisis chapter, in order for the manager to be able to implement new working methods and strategies to the organization, must the employees have trust on manager's crisis management abilities. Manager's trust towards the employees on the other hand helps him/her to release the pressure of highlighted need for authorities and decentralize the authorities by giving the employees more decision-power. If there is

a strong pre-crisis trust it enhances a high-quality communication which eases both parties' information restriction problems and enables better information sharing. However, trust is fragile and in the highlighted vulnerable situation, the frailty becomes accentuated. If the manager experiences distrust towards the employee, can it backfire in a remote setting even worse than in a regular on-site arrangement since the distrust may result the manager to set up strict and rigorous rules and performance measures for the employee to follow in order to get more control. Also, the decreased feeling of control because of the crisis may get the manager to use more control measures towards the employees. This over-control communicates to lack of trust towards the employee which can be extremely hampering for the manager-employee relationship. At the same time, distrust or lack of trust may emerge as poor-quality communication which hampers the information sharing and complicates not only the manager's work but also the employees especially in the situation of no common location.

Above, there were examples of the correlation between the trust and the actions of the individuals. That is why we have illustrated the manager and the employee as separate factors in the framework to highlight them as individuals, as a trustor and a trustee, in the situation. In the middle of these two parties, as the core of the interactions between them is the communication. Both fields of research, telecommuting and crisis, highlight the importance of communication which is why it is placed as one of the key elements in the development of trust during remote crisis situation. It has been seen that ability and willingness to communicate with each other is enough to maintain and develop trust relationships even in the absence of co-location. It can also be used to help with the difficulties related to diminished informal communication and social support that can arise in a remote setting. However, as media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) suggests, the selection of proper mean for communication in different situation is important especially when face-to-face contact is limited.

To analyze the communication between the manager and the employee, we will be using James and Wooten's (2005) three-dimensional concept of communication that has been seen to develop trust between the two parties. These dimensions of communication are (1) openness, (2) honesty, and (3) frequency. To analyze the manager-employee trust, we will identify what effects the situation had on these

dimensions of communication since they have been seen to be directly related to the trust relationship of the two parties.

At the bottom of the figure 6, we have placed the organization and its effects on the manager-employee trust relationship. As we showcased in the crisis chapter, organizations respond to crises in a way that for example authorizations are centralized and there might be information overflow without the ability to process the amount of information (Nunamaker Jr. et al.,1989). These responses have an effect on the development of trust and have also been seen to be eased because of strong pre-crisis trust which is why we will analyze the organizational factors in the situation too. Also, the hierarchy of the organization is something that will be looked into since it has been seen that lower hierarchy organization enables decentralization of authorities and perceived autonomy to increase. However, as we have pointed out, these characteristics require a strong trust from the manager and if there is a lack of it, can the crisis situation and the absence of common location increase the distrust in a lower hierarchy. On a higher hierarchy level, are the authorities more centralized which leads to rigid and homogenous decisions that may hamper the whole organization. At the same time, higher-level hierarchy does not need as much trust between the manager and the employee because the decision-making happens higher. So, in a case of low pre-crisis trust, may high-level hierarchy organization keep the relationship alive, and the trust does not get as hard hit as it would in a lower organization.

At the top of the figure, we included the idea of “a trusting climate nurtures trust” (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003), which is common knowledge under the research area of organizational trust and that has been placed in our framework to run through the whole process of the development of trust. This means that if there are positive outcomes during the telecommuting period by for example employees showing highlighted cooperation or manager’s decision-making helping employees through the crisis, nurtures it the trust and trust should increase. On the other hand, negative actions and reactions between the manager and the employee related to their relationship decreases the built trust between the two parties. So, by using constructional point of view, we will combine the different factors that rise up from the data in correlation with this notion of trust increasing trust to form an understanding of the situation.

After the telecommuting time under crisis there will be returning back to normal operations, as illustrated in the figure 5. Regarding the manager-employee trust, at the time of normal operations, the trust has developed to a state of “trust conditions after working remotely under crisis” (figure 6). However, since the data of the study is collected during the crisis, we exclude this after-crisis situation from the analysis, since it cannot be studied yet. We can, however, form some kind of interpretation of the after-crisis state based on how the trust is developing during the situation. As a conclusion, pre-crisis trust (1), manager and employee as individuals (2), the communication between them (3) and the nature of the organization (4) have an effect on how the trust-relationship is found to construct from the manager’s point of view, and which are the different aspects that we will conceptualize in order to answer the research question of how manager’s perceived trust towards the employee develops in a remote setting during a crisis which this theoretical framework is used as a basis for.

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we will tell in detail how the data was collected including the sampling, interviewing and transcription methods. After that we will go through step by step the process of the analysis of the data and how we were able to form the results of the study.

5.1 Data collection

Our research question “how does manager’s perceived trust towards the employee develop in a remote setting during a crisis” guided us to use semi-structured interviews, since they are used in situations where the interviewees describe how they have experienced a phenomenon (Brinkmann, 2013). Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of flexibility in for example refining questions or asking relevant questions based on the experiences of the interviewees (Sarajärvi & Tuomi, 2018). Since our main topic, trust, is an abstract force which cannot be seen or touched and people may experience it rather differently, it was crucial for the researcher to be able to adapt the questions based on the interviewees understanding of trust as well as for the interviewee to be able to clarify the topics and questions asked. In addition to that, semi-structured interviews enable the themes to be restricted to the aspects of interest in the study but since the situation may vary greatly between managers, there needed to be space for free flow of communication so the specific topics could be deepened if they were relevant on that specific situation.

The sampling method used in this research were the combination of purposeful sampling and convenience sampling. Purposeful (or purposive) sampling is a sampling method that is used to find specific interviewees that would provide as rich information as possible to be able to answer the research question (Flick, 2018, p. 88). Convenience sampling on the other hand is based on availability of the interviewee (Flick, 2018, p. 89). The interviewees were selected based on the researchers personal, or third-party knowledge of the manager that they would 1) be available and willing to share their experiences on the research issue and 2) they would fill the requirements of the research population and thus give rich information of the phenomenon. The requirements consisted of three factors: 1) the interviewee had acted as a manager

already before the crisis and remote situation, 2) the manager had no (or limited) experience in remote working and remote management, and 3) the manager or the employees had been working remotely (full- or part-time) because of the coronavirus. Especially the second requirement was applied to get the most contrast on the experienced time before the crisis and during it so that the interviewee would have difference in the experienced trust before and during the situation.

Before every interview, the researcher explained that the interview was going to be anonymous, and the data would be displayed so that it could not be connected to any specific manager. Also, it was made sure for the interviewee that the interviews were going to be recorded and after the data analysis, the interviews and the transcripts were going to be deleted and they would not be added to the final research paper. Also, since the point of the interview is to get as much knowledge on the phenomenon under study, interview questions should be given to the interviewees beforehand in order to prepare (Sarajärvi & Tuomi, 2018), which is why we also gave the interviewees some of the questions beforehand. We did not give all the questions in advance, but every topic and possible questions were presented for the interviewees at least two days before the actual interview.

In the data collection we used two sets of interview questions. The first questions were generated based on the initial literature review of telecommuting and crisis and we used this question set as the basis for the three first interviews. The questions were grouped thematically but as the interviews were semi-structured, the questions played a role of a check list in order for the researcher to remember to cover all relevant themes if they did not emerge naturally from the interviewees' experiences. The themes in the first question pattern were (1) ground information, (2) the development of manager-employee trust relationship, (3) coronavirus as a crisis, (4) telecommuting during the corona virus, (5) management of the situation, (6) views on the development of trust during the situation.

Auerback and Silverstein (2003) point out that if the research problem has uncertainties and uniqueness, we cannot assume that the existing literature can provide us all the questions and themes that are relevant regarding the topic. That is why the themes were kept rather wide and open so that the interviewees were able to bring up

issues that possibly were overlooked or ignored based on the literature review. After the three initial interviews were conducted, we returned back to the theoretical part of the research and developed the theoretical framework to match the experienced phenomenon and to highlight the aspects that emerged the most during the interviews. Also, the theoretical background of trust, was deepened and refined which gave new ideas for the next interviews. During the development of the theoretical background, we kept a memo on the side where additional interview questions were listed to help the researcher to deepen the knowledge of the specific issues that seemed to be in the centre of the phenomenon. After the first idea of the theoretical framework was built, the second set of interview questions were generated. In the second question base, we added a theme of communication as one of the interest points, in addition to which the last theme, “views on the development of trust during the situation” was developed to a broader theme of “changes from the manager’s perspective” which included the trust aspect as a separate entity.

The interviews were constructed via online video meeting, either Zoom or Microsoft Teams, depending on the preference of the interviewee and the interviews were from 1 to 1,5 hours long. We used the recording function of the program to save the interview and within two days of the original interview, the video was transcribed into text form. Interviews were conducted individually since trust and distrust towards employees might be a delicate topic and we needed to be able to give the managers as safe and comfortable space as possible to be able to open up about the topic. Another reason for individual interviews was that in order to answer the research questions, we needed to go quite deep in specific situations of trust or distrust development to be able to understand the causes and consequences for it.

All in all, we conducted six interviews of middle-level managers from different fields of business. There were three managers working in the finance or human resource departments of different companies, one in retail business and two managers from the field of education (headmasters of schools). The managers had from two (2) to twenty-four (24) employees in total. One of the interviewees was male and five were females with age range from approximately 50 to 60 years of old. The manager experiences of the interviewees were from approximately one year to more than twenty years of experience as a manager. The employee relationships also differed greatly since there

were few employees who had begun working under the manager only few weeks prior the crisis while the longest manager-employee relationships were more than 15 years long.

5.2 Data analysis

“In qualitative research, data analysis occurs alongside data collection” (Galletta, 2012, p. 119), which means that the analysis is ongoing and is not even possible to separate from the data collection phase. In our research the second part of data collection (2nd set of interview questions) was conducted based on the data analysis during the first three interviews and the deepened understanding of the theory around the main topics. After all the interviews were transcribed, we already had some kind of understanding on the themes and issues that will affect to the results of the study, which also illustrates the ongoing nature of the data analysis.

Even though during the data collection phase there is already some kind of understanding of the phenomenon, the data still needs to be analysed in order to fully understand what the interviewees have experienced and to be able to answer the research questions. As Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) highlight, the researcher needs to somehow forget the theory in the beginning of the coding process to be able to see as objectively as possible what the interviewees are saying. Galletta also highlighted the same notation of “immersing yourself in the data themselves” (2012, p. 122). That is why the first step we did was that we started to go through the raw text and began to code the text to some kind of categories or themes using the NVivo program.

After the open coding was done, there were 82 codes that we started to work with. The first thing we did was that we started to merge similar codes and started to create some kind of categorization. The categorization seemed to evolve as relatively in line with the interview question themes which were built based on the initial theoretical knowledge. So, this was the phase where we first started to combine the data with the theory, or as Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) explain it, to build bridges between the theory and data. The categories were related to for example communication, building of trust, crisis punctuation, manager’s actions and views and employees’ actions.

As Galletta (2012, p. 123) points out, there might be codes that may have come up in the first part of coding but does not have any contribution in the answering of the research question. This happened in our study too, since after the initial categorization was done, there was a lot of data that was not directly related to our research problem. In Auerbach and Silverstein's book (2003, p. 37), they use the idea of research concerns to find the relevant text from the data. In our case, the interviewees had a lot of experiences and thoughts about the remote work during the coronavirus with topics that had nothing to do with trust between the manager and the employee. In order to be able to get the relevant information from the data that concerned our research problem, we started to go through the codes one by one with the research concerns in mind. The two concerns that was written down to guide us through the analysis were 1) things where the manager-employee trust can be seen and 2) things that reflect to the manager-employee trust. By keeping the goal of the study clear, we were able to find the important codes and categories that we continued working with while marking off text that was not relevant to our research question. However, we kept them in a folder of "unnecessary" codes, so that we could return to them during the process of analyzation if necessary.

At the same time with the analysis, we kept a memo on the side where we noted ideas and interpretations. This was done in order to be able to utilize later on the ideas that came up during the very first stages of the combination of theory and the interviews. After the categories and codes were went through with the research concerns in mind, we had developed 8 main categories that stood up in the findings and from which we started to build the results of the study from. We decided not to work with the categorizations anymore, since there were connections from category to another, which needed to be written open in order to understand the connections between the themes. That was the point when we took the theoretical framework created in the previous chapter with and started to analyse the data based on it.

With the thematic interpretation of the data using the theoretical framework as a basis to guide our thinking, we were able to find six themes that form the results of the study and will be presented in the next chapter. Figure 7 is the illustration of these themes and how they are situated in relation to the theoretical framework. The first two themes regard the process from pre-crisis situation to crisis punctuation and the period just

after the punctuation and the four last themes are conceptual themes during the telecommuting time under crisis.

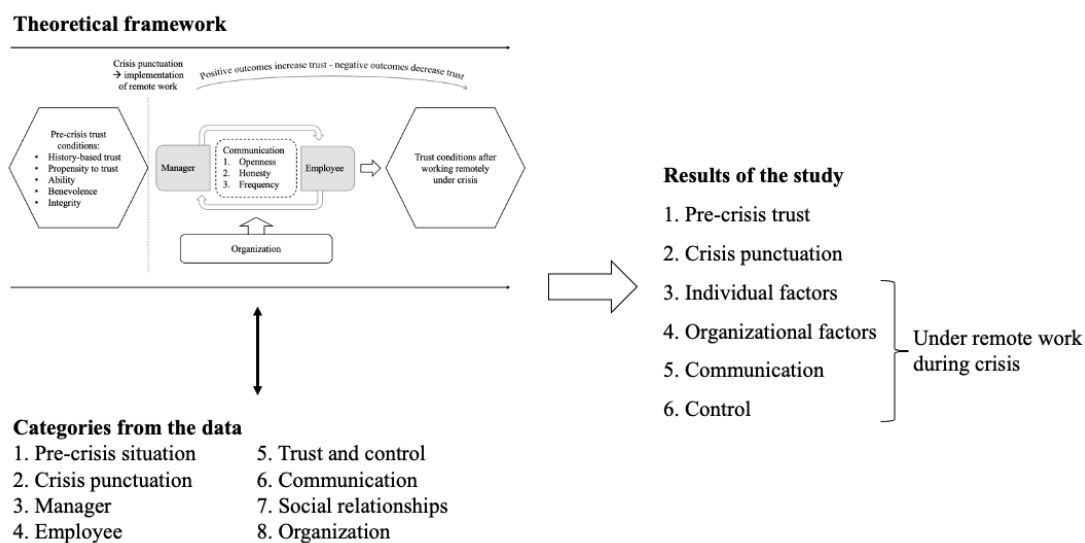


Figure 7. Processual and conceptual themes of the results.

6 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

In this chapter we are going to go through the results of the research in relation to the theoretical framework that we have built and which we have used as a basis in interpreting the results. As illustrated in the figure 7 above, the themes of the results are both processual and conceptual. During the first two subchapters we will go through how the trust was developed pre-crisis and how it was in correlation during the crisis punctuation and the first weeks after that. In the four last subchapters, we will concentrate on the time of telecommuting under crisis and explain how individual and organizational factors as well as the communication and managerial control was related to the manager-employee trust.

Our research gave multifaceted understanding on how the existing trust affected the remote work under crisis especially from the managers point of view and what kind of effects the situation had to the manager-employee trust. Within our interviewees, all of the interviewees seemed to have developed a certain level of trust before the crisis punctuation even though there might not have been long manager-employee relationships before that. Our results suggest that weakest trust relationships were based on the abilities of the trustee while stronger relationships covered the employees' other aspects of the trustworthiness. These existing trust relationships affected in a variety of ways by affecting to the crisis responses, communication, and control related issues.

We also found out a wide range of changes that the managers experienced because of the remote work under crisis. We had six interviewees, one of which experienced slight decrease in trust with *some* of the employees. Two on the other hand experienced the manager-employee trust to remain approximately the same, and three experienced increase in trust because of the situation. While overall trust could have been the same or increased, there could be seen small details where concerns on the employees' trustworthiness could be witnessed. If the manager experienced decrease in trust, he/she underlined that when it came to work related issues, there was no change in trust, but however there were other small things that made the manager to question their trust towards the employee.

6.1 Pre-crisis trust relationship

As we presented in the theoretical framework, trustor's propensity to trust, trustee's ability, benevolence, and integrity as well as the length of the relationship form the pre-crisis trust relationship of the manager and the employee which we started to look into. From the pre-crisis trust we will first focus on the dimensions of trust after which we will touch upon the history-based trust.

When asking about the development of trust at the beginning of the relationship from the managers, there stood up different kind of emphasis that they thought to be in the key element: day-to-day encounters, amount of communication, both informal and formal - asking and listening, equal treating to all employees, and the functioning of the actual work.

"...when the work starts to function, work gets done, and there is the communication, and one is able to talk to the other, that's where it starts to build up"

In trust definitions, the risk-taking aspect has been widely brought up but as Mayer et al. (1995) point out, it is the *willingness* to take a risk or be vulnerable that creates the trust. Our results suggest that even though trustor's propensity to trust, meaning the willingness and ability to trust the trustee, has an effect on the relationship of the two parties, it is however, the employee and their trustworthiness that have the most effect on whether the manager is able to trust the other person or not. There was only one interviewee that expressed their propensity as a trustor: *"In principle, I start with an idea that all people are trustworthy"*. However, according to our findings the managers highly acknowledged the differences between employees in the development and level of trust and they were not the same with every employee. There could be seen that the "basic-trust" as one of the managers expressed it, can be developed with all the employees and many of the managers highlighted that even though there can be slight differences, there is no lack of trust with anyone of them. The differences they encountered with the employees were strongly related to the employees' characteristics such as conscientiousness, work orientation and overall personality.

6.1.1 Trustee's trustworthiness

Meyer et al. (1995) introduces three characteristics of the trustee, in our case the employee, that together build the foundation for the level of the trustor's trust towards the person. First of them is the ability that was clearly present in our results too as one of the corner stones in the development of trust. The managers used the phrase *"through action"* when explaining the development of trust towards the employees, meaning that by being more and more certain over the abilities of the employees, they were able to start trusting the employees; as one of the manager stated: *"I know what every one of them is doing and what are their strengths and I trust their competence."* In a situation where the managers came to the organization after the employees, meaning that they had to start building the manager-employee trust from the ground, they clearly wanted also to show their ability in order to gain the employees' trust:

"When they did not know something, they realized while talking to me that I actually had knowledge and that's where it started (the trust to develop)"

In addition to showcasing their own abilities, managers also thought an important part of the early stages of the relationship building was helping the employees with gaining the abilities for successful work. This was seen from managers' emphasis on orientation and wide information sharing related to the actual work. Our findings seem to be fully in line with the previous literature on the ability of trustee in that the abilities of the trustee are the starting point for development of trust. Krot and Lewicka (2012) for example found out that ability is the most important aspect of trust when it comes to manager trusting the employee especially in the beginning of the relationship. This means that in order to start building a stronger trust relationship, the manager usually at this point is convinced that the employee has the knowhow and competence to do the work they are required to. After the basis for trust has been built, the manager has been seen to start developing deeper relationship through the two other dimensions of the trustee, integrity, and benevolence (Krot & Lewicka, 2012).

In addition to the abilities of the trustee, in our research we found out that most of the managers explained not only the development of trust between them and their employees but also the maintenance of that built trust with aspects related to

benevolence, which has been combined with words “loyalty, openness, caring and supportiveness” (Colquitt et al., 2007, p. 910). The managers highlighted for example phrases “*open communication*”, “*open relationship*”, “*being present*” and “*building the relationship together*”. All of these actions were something that the managers thought to be valuable in the early stages of the relationship, but also in the maintenance of a strong trust-relationship. We can clearly see in our results that by their own actions, the managers tried to create an atmosphere of benevolence, where managers focused on showing their benevolence towards the employees by supporting them and trying to be open, and in return they believed the employees to do the same. As one of the managers stated: “*if I trust them, I also trust that they trust me in return and come say if something is wrong*”.

As pointed out, the managers did not differentiate their trust towards the employees versus employees’ trust towards them, but their overall view of the development of trust included these aspects of benevolence. In light of this, we are going to especially concentrate on these aspects when interpreting the development of trust during the telecommuting situation under a crisis. If the managers believe for example open communication and social support (being present) as key elements in development of trust, if they can maintain these activities, and they believe the employees to do the same thing, trust should not be affected by the telecommuting time during the crisis.

Existing literature has found out that also integrity of the employee affects greatly, especially when the relationship deepens, and the manager is convinced that the employee has the competences needed to execute the job properly. According to Meyer et al.’s definition (1995), integrity of the employee means that they follow and accept the rules and customs of the organization from the perspective of the manager. Colquitt et al. (2007, p. 910) mentions “fairness, justice, consistency, and promise fulfillment” to be related to the integrity of the employee. In our results, integrity seemed to play same kind of role as the benevolence, but it did not emerge as strongly. Managers wanted to show their integrity, which was seen in manager’s emphasis in “*showing equal treatment with all the employees*” and “*keeping promises*”. Also, they pointed out that for employees to be trustworthy, they have to play by certain rules and having “*good manners*” does not hurt: “*Work community has to have certain common ground rules where we operate even though people are different.*”

6.1.2 History-based trust

Previous research suggests that the longer the manager and employee have been working together, the more positive encounters they have experienced and the trust between them increases cumulatively (Kaplan et al., 2018). That is why we wanted to look into the lengths of the relationships and if they have any effect in the foundation of trust before the crisis.

The managers in our research had a variety of experience in being a manager. The most experienced manager had worked as a manager for over 20 years while the least experienced had only little over a year of manager experience. The lengths of the relationships varied from longest manager-employee relationship being 17 years and the shortest was just only a month old before the crisis broke out. Even though the range was wide, our results suggest that the phrase “positive encounters” is more important than the length of the relationship itself. One of the manager expressed the idea of the length of the relationship affecting to the trust:

“Yes, of course if there is a person who has been my employee for a longer time, the trust is naturally stronger, though it is not that much weaker towards an employee that has been only a short period of time as my employee.”

As he/she said, however there is a working trust-relationship with shorter manager-employee situation, which can be explained with the aspects of both the employee and the employer. The manager is able to build a functioning trust relationship also during a short period of time if they find the employee trustworthy and are able to show the employee his/her trustworthiness too. For another manager *“we have all worked for the same company for so long and worked together that we have formed a well-functioning working customs.”* As a contradiction to the idea that the longer one is as an employee, the stronger the trust relationship, we found out a situation where the manager had the least trust towards the employees that had been working for the longest:

“Yes, there are differences in the trust between employees. For example if there is a deadline to something, I know straight away that not all will give that information on

time...it's always the 2-4 (employees) that leave things undone and I already know that I need to remind them few days before the deadline so it doesn't cause friction...and I just take it with humor...they are the same most long-term employees and I have just gotten used to it."

For one of the manager, he/she highlighted that when it came to work-related competences, he/she had full trust that the employees but *"other things can be a bit more challenging – depends of course on the person and how the co-operation works"*. This manager did not have such long relationships with his/her employees as did some of the other, which could suggest that they were not at this point been able to build a strong foundation of trust with the employees, but the trustworthiness of the employees lied strongly on the basis of ability and competence. There were other managers that had shorter manager-employee relationships with the current employees, but they had a longer history of working as a manager. This suggest that there might be also be effect in trust-building abilities with how experienced the managers are as leaders.

So, history-based trust cannot be taken for granted because it is the *positive* encounters that cumulate and increase the trust over the time. But as with one of the managers, the same people did not respect the deadlines repeatedly, and the negative experiences started to cumulate, which did not at least help with strengthening the trust. All in all, it seems that the managers do not experience the length of the relationship as a key element, but the differences seem to lie more on the personalities of the employee, and as one of the manager states it the *"chemistry between me and the employee"*.

6.2 Crisis punctuation

6.2.1 Time scarcity

Since the coronavirus was an external crisis, a pandemic that spread across the globe dramatically quickly, the organizations' time scarcity for the revolutionary changes they had to make in order to protect the employees and the whole society was highly present. As the managers explained the situation, there were not much proactive decisions that could have been made. One expressed the crisis punctuation as *"driving to a wall"*. Another's thoughts were following:

“It came so quickly that everything shuts down and we also got the announcement that all will move to work remotely from home. Then the whole office was just emptied: all belongings to go, and home.”

Crisis management literature has raised the importance of proactive crisis management and that one of the key elements in crisis management are the planning and preparation phases. Research on crisis management process in relation to manager-employee trust has also found out, that if the actions towards a crisis are more reactive because of the suddenness of the crisis, it may have negative effects to the manager-employee trust relationship (Sahin et al., 2015). In our research we found no planning or preparation actions from the managers that they would have done. All of them seemed to highlight the fact that *“it came so quickly that there was no time to prepare.”* So, it seems that the decisions made during the crisis were mainly reactive and the whole crisis management process was only beginning from after the crisis punctuation, in crisis response stage. If we lean on to existing literature, this suggests that the trust relationship was even under higher vulnerability because the lack of proactive crisis management.

According to Sahin et al. (2015) these reactive measures that may have the most negative effect on trust relationship of the decision maker and the employee are short term decisions that are related to for example layoffs, that were actually quite common during the coronavirus because of the lockdowns or temporary closing of restaurants or other public places. However, in the case of coronavirus, the decision makers were not the managers, at least in most of the cases, but the rules and restrictions that shook the whole organization came higher up from hierarchy and the managers did not have authority to say otherwise. There was one organization in our data that had layoffs during the crisis, but it concerned the company as a whole and the interviewee could not affect the situation as a manager. That can be a reason why it seems that the lack of proactive decision making did not affect to the trust relationship of the manager and the employee directly. However, as we will see later, it may cause friction between the upper management and the interviewees.

Since for all of the organization members, the coronavirus started off from an external factor, that can also be called as sudden crises (James & Wooten, 2005) and the

organizations and especially the managers themselves did not have any responsibility of causing, it can be a reason why we did not see any problems because of the crisis management per se that would have had direct impact on the manager-employee trust. It can be because managers were not blamed for what has happened and the employees were more understanding towards the managers compared to for example and internal PR-crisis created by poor management actions. This may lead to employees showing compassion towards managers' important and suddenly challenged job by trying to support the managers more than in a situation where the manager is seen to have influence on the punctuation of the crisis (James & Wooten, 2005). The same has been seen to apply with trust: Friedman, Kahn and Howe (2000) point out that when employees understand that their manager is not responsible of the situation, the trust between the two parties does not suffer. These notions of external crisis can be one reason why the manager-employee trust was not seen to be affected because of the crisis or the crisis management actions that much.

6.2.2 Crisis responses

The main organizational crisis response that is the main topic in our research is the telecommuting. In this case, as stated earlier, governmental recommendations were put to place for telecommuting to be utilized for all possible workers, which meant that the managers did not have a say in who to allow to work from home and who not to. However, some organizations did not work completely from home during the crisis, but the employees could decide whether they wanted to work at the office or from home. Also, most interviewed managers could decide whether they wanted to work from home or at the office. However, all of them had a situation that at least some of the employees were managed remotely, under a crisis.

Existing research has found out a difference in the number of telecommuting programs and the number of employees actually working from home. Bleijenbergh et al. (2010) among others (f.ex. Kurland & Cooper, 2002) suggest that it is actually the managers willingness not to let employees work from home that causes this imbalance and thus creates tension and unsatisfaction among the employees (Kaplan et al., 2018). One of the reasons for managers not letting employees telecommute has been suggested to be trust towards the employee (Kurland & Cooper, 2002). In our research, we could find

differences in how the managers and the employees reacted to the order to telecommute. Most of the managers experienced the sudden change to telecommuting quite calmly and did not experience any distress, while few were concerned over how the remote work would work. One manager expressed their worries about an employee who did not feel confident to work from home because of the lack of technological skills, but the manager expressed this worry more as a desire to be of help to the employee and not as a sign of distrust. Another manager would prefer all employees working at the office but gave a reason that it was “smoother” that way and *“even though I say that I would prefer if everyone was at the office, I don’t know how much it is a psychological thing in my head that I like that the people are there.”* One of the managers seemed to have concerns especially at the beginning:

“As a manager, when people started to work from home and we had no plans who’s at the office and who’s at home, I got a bit worried whether we are going to get everything done on time....Many times, I was a bit scared of how we are going to get this work.”

However, it seems that the concerns that the managers had, were not directly related to trust issues but the feelings were more related to employee support, uncertainty, and work functioning. In light of these findings, it seems that the managers did not have lack of trust towards the employees before the crisis, but the manager-employee trust was in a level that in organizations, where employees could decide their place of work, the managers did not forbid the remote work, or in organizations where remote work became compulsory, the managers did not react negatively on the employees starting the remote work. Another reason for managers reacting on a quite natural way to the crisis punctuation, can be that because of the pandemic and wide recommendations of telecommuting, the managers had to just accept the situation, which means that managers’ willingness to allow telecommuting did not affect at this point.

As existing literature points out, crises are revolutionary changes that require the whole organization to develop and adjust their working routines, which trust has been seen to help with. The implementation of new rules and strategies related to crisis require some kind of trust relationship between the manager and the employee, for the employee to implement the new customs and for the manager to believe that the

employees are doing it. Indeed, the managers did experience huge changes especially during the first weeks of the crisis response stage. For one manager, the changes went well: *“The shift to remote work succeeded surprisingly well; the employees figured out great ways to work remotely really fast”*. For others, there was clearly a need for better structured rules and customs:

“I hope that we would have been more strongly one step ahead...especially regarding the safety measures.”

“From the beginning there should have been clearer framework for working (at home) – it took little time before we found the right ways of working.”

These quotations give us proof that both the crisis related issues, such as the safety measures but also the remote work related unclarities caused managers to frustrate over the situation. Interviewees clearly indicate that they would have wanted for more emphasis on proactive crisis management and that they felt that the reactive managerial decision were inferior or not clear enough at the beginning of the crisis. This “chaos” as one of the managers described the beginning of the crisis to be, highlights the importance of pre-crisis trust, which Regester (1989) also point out in their findings. They suggest that in order to survive from a crisis situation, the trust should be built already before the crisis occurs because after the crisis punctuation, the chaos created by the crisis may make it extremely difficult to start building trust between the manager and the employee (Regester, 1989). So, in other words, because the lack of proactive crisis management due to the time scarcity, and the chaos caused by both the crisis and the telecommuting in the beginning of the situation, it seems that the pre-crisis trust had stronger influence on the situation compared to if there had been more proactive measures, or the crisis did not include such dramatic changes related to the remote work.

Not only were there organizational responses to the crisis punctuation but also a variety of emotions emerged either from the managers themselves or from the employees. Based on our findings, the most common feeling among the managers related to the situation, especially at the beginning was uncertainty, which also previous literature has used widely in definitions of crises, and which supports the importance of trust

between the manager and the employee. The uncertainty was highly related to the crisis and how the pandemic started to spread:

“One could not know at all where we are heading and one were not able to prepare – radio was on, one heard this and that from the television – and based on these, there were decision made.”

There was also a lot of uncertainty related to the instructions that came from national, local or company level, as we already witnessed previously. There could be seen that the managers were given instructions that were not clear enough which put them in a place where they had to fill in the gaps of the instructions. There were some organizations that did formal telecommuting contracts or agreements, while some had looser instructions. A point to mention here is that however, the interviewees themselves were not the ones that wanted to use formal contracts, which supports the notion from earlier, that the managers did not suffer from low levels of trust before the crisis punctuation, since they did not feel the need to set up strict contracts and rules.

There was clear evidence of also exhaustion because of the coronavirus. One manager explained that especially the employees were suffering from tiredness to the situation and would have wanted for the manager to see them face-to-face more, but because of the restrictions it was not possible. That resulted the employees to get tired with audio and video calls, but more face-to-face contact would have been needed which caused worry for the manager. Actual feelings of fear could also be seen because of the coronavirus:

“Some of the employees have actually been afraid to work...so that there were sick leaves because the very reason that customers were acting how they were (not respecting for example safety distance).”

Related to the time scarcity of the crisis and the dramatic changes happening because of sudden change to remote work, some of the managers expressed that the employees felt the work to be more distressing at home than at the office because of the increased work load they experienced at home. For one manager it was possible to choose whether they worked from home or at the office in which they stated: *“There were so*

many changes going on that it was easier to be at the office.” One of the managers witnessed the increase in workload themselves which affected their own well-being:

“From my behalf, I was stressed about the enormous increase in workload: the hours of the day were just filled with work and sleep and nothing else fit in...So of course I was concerned about the workload of the employees since they were doing similar work”.

There was also a situation told by the interviewee where the increased workload because of the crisis resulted the employees to also decrease their initiative for communication towards the manager. This was because the employees’ own crisis management took most of their attention. At the same time some managers themselves, when working from home, felt that they did not have time to contact and talk with the employees. We will touch upon these communicational aspects a bit later. However, as a conclusion to these findings, there was clearly a lot of negative feelings of uncertainty, fear, confusion, and stress that affected either the manager, the employee or both of them.

Crisis literature has highlighted the importance of human factor in crisis responses and crisis management. In light of these findings, we can support the idea presented by Habermas (1975, p. 1) that “the crisis cannot be separated from the viewpoint of the one who *is* undergoing it”. That is why James and Wooten (2005) for example point out that in a crisis situation, managers should be focusing on the employees rather than operational side in order to success in crisis management. This human focus has been seen to also help with trust maintenance and development during a crisis because the manager’s highlighted focus on the employees’ well-being (James & Wooten, 2005).

Since the situation caused a variety of negative feelings within the individuals and confusion and uncertainty also on an organizational level, in order for the manager to be able to keep the manager-employee trust level strong during the situation too, it seems that they should focus on the employees rather than the operational side, as James and Wooten (2005) suggest. The existing research also points out that the differences between the organizations, start only at the crisis response stage and not before the crisis punctuation. These differences between organizations have been seen

to be related to not only the managers crisis decisions and responses but also the employees' actions and organizational effects.

The interviewees in our research seemed understand the human-factor of the situation, since as previous quotations showed, the managers expressed worry of the employees' well-being and coping with the crisis, and also tried to tell it to the employees too: *"I listened and supported in a way that I gave permission that now we are not expecting impossibilities"*. However, even though the managers understand the importance of the human-factor (= employees), in order to increase or maintain trust during the situation, there are issues related to for example communication and control, which we already in the theoretical framework introduced, that have a strong influence in how the trust can be maintained.

6.3 Individual factors on trust development in the situation

From this chapter on, we are now focusing on the different factors that were present after the crisis punctuation and which constructed the development of trust during the telecommuting under crisis. Even though the focus of this research was with the manager as the trustor, managers' beliefs on how they are trusted affected the situation too. In our research, most of the managers believed that the employees trusted them during the crisis under the remote work arrangement. Our findings suggest that the managers saw and believed there to be a correlation between them as a trustor and as a trustee: *"I at least hope that the employees have the same belief and opinion that I know that I trust them."* However, all of the managers acknowledge that they cannot be certain, but they can only trust and hope for the employees to trust them.

Existing literature suggests that manager's positive perspectives of the trust towards themselves, helps the manager to concentrate on supporting the employees rather than controlling (Wiesenfeld et al., 1999). Our results show this same correlation since while the managers had a belief of employees trusting them, many of them used words such as "supportive", "listener" and "coaching", which are part of the supportive management rather than controlling management. Also, most of the managers had a belief that the crisis situation did not affect the employees' trust towards them, as one of the managers stated: *"I have a feeling that they (employees) trusted that I for*

example forward instructions and take care of the responsibilities I have". There, however, could be seen problems with for example top management and their decisions. Existing research suggests that in case of employee trusting the manager, employees are more willing to share information and communicate more openly (Pyöriä et al., 2016). As we will witness later, there were differences in employees' willingness to do these things, which we believe to be exactly because of their lack of trust towards the manager.

6.3.1 Employees' trustworthiness in the situation

The managers' own beliefs over the trust towards them could have had some effect on how they were able to balance the trust and control during the remote work but according to our findings, it was not shown as much as did the employee's perceived trustworthiness related to personality or abilities. When explaining why the manager had a great trust towards the employees, they highlighted the personalities of the employees quite greatly. These findings support other researchers' findings too since for example Wells and Kipnis (2001) found out that the reasons for trusting the employee or the manager is highly related to the personality of especially the trustee. In their findings, the managers described the trust or distrust especially from the viewpoint of employees' personal reasons, but they did not forget the job-related issues either. Our findings support the same ideas too, since first of all, the main reason for trusting was that all work was done also at home. The second reason was then the employees' personality traits that the manager believed to be aspects of trustworthiness: *"Maybe the reason (for trusting them in a remote setting) is that I know the employees and I think I know their ethics and morale towards the job."* This supports the importance of the employee's trustworthiness as a key element in functioning of trust in general as well in telecommuting.

There could be seen a correlation between the length of the relationship and trustworthiness as we already touched upon earlier, but in this case the same correlation was seen also during telecommuting. For one employee he/she was confident that the employee could handle their work at home because of their great skills. Related to another employee, she/he stated:

“With another employee, who was quite new employee to me, maybe I somehow wanted to have more communication and be more present with them to be certain that I can support them if they feel that they need help in any way.”

These findings support the theory of history-based trust, since clearly with the employee who had been working for the company only a little time, the trust building process was still incomplete, and the manager had to try to continue building the relationship by focusing on communicating and interacting with that person more. If the manager had not pointed out this aspect of support, it would have indicated that during the short period of work together, they had been able to build the trust between them and the manager would have treated him/her the same way as others.

Technological abilities were also one aspect that arose during the interviews as a concern that affected the employees' own trust in themselves and also managers' trust towards the employees:

“One employee was less experienced with digital skills, so he/she definitely had more need for support related to the technical side of the remote work.”

It makes sense that if the employee was confident about their abilities to work remotely and handle the technological side, the manager feels also more confident over the employee's abilities, and thus is able to trust the employee. However, if the manager has doubts over the employee's benevolence or integrity to work in a proper manner at home, the manager may not be able to trust the employee. At the same time, if there is lack of technological abilities, the employees may need more guidance and support with the telecommuting, but if their trustworthiness is high in the eyes of the manager related to the other aspects of trustworthiness, the lack in abilities was not seen to have influence in the manager-employee trust, it just meant that the manager had worry over the employee and wanted to give more support than to the one with higher abilities.

When it came to aspects of poor trust during the situation, the interviewees explained it with employees' personality traits as well. According to the managers, people they had doubts on or did not trust as much as the others somehow “slacked off” meaning

that they were not performing on a high level, were using time for “*personal things, scrolling phone or something like that*” or were not properly filling in timesheets:

“Some people don’t remember that they have taken a longer lunch break and they mark more overtime hours than usual...but there are also these people that work overtime in the office, and I have no idea where it comes from.”

It seems that the manager could not trust that people with overtime were doing work but that they somehow were using the work time ineffectively. This indicates that the manager could not trust the employees to use their time properly but had doubts over their work ethics. Another manager pointed out the same thing but referred to other organization members than his/her own:

“There definitely are people that take advantage of this situation in a bad way, but I tell you that these people slack off also at the office...If you are that kind of person, you will nevertheless do it, despite the time and place...it’s the personality.”

So, in both of these cases, the managers pointed out that the telecommuting situation was not the problem, but they had lack of trust towards the employees already at the office. However, as we will explain later, one employee’s overtime increased while working remotely which increased the manager’s distrust towards him/her even further. However, what seems to be the difference that causes the differences in trust levels of the managers is not the telecommuting per se, but it is the employees’ trustworthiness in the eyes of the manager. As one of the manager said, his/her employees do not have this “*slacking-off-personality*” which made him/her to trust them completely also during remote work.

6.3.2 Change resistance

Change resistance is something that also came up in our research and which seemed to affect to the development of trust during the situation. However, the surprising finding related to change resistance was that even though both crisis and telecommuting change implementation may be more difficult because of change resistance in revolutionary changes, there were evidence that the change resistance

actually decreased because of the unusual situation. One manager felt that the coronavirus was a positive thing in the development of the manager-employee trust. This was because there had not been a long manager-employee relationships since the manager was quite new in the organization and the manager felt that the relationships could be built under the crisis better since the change resistance to him/her as a manager was smaller:

“The development of trust is definitely affected by how much employees have the change resistance...and that how easily they adjust to that the fact that before things were done that way, and now the other way...it for sure affects how quickly we can find the trust...I was spared from the “usually we have done things this way” -attitude since now nothing was done like before and it had nothing to do with me being the manager.”

So, in a situation where there could be change resistance towards the new manager, the chaotic crisis decreased this change resistance and the manager could see increase in trust during the crisis, also from the employees' side. There was also another instance where low change resistance helped the manager's trust towards the employees: *“I have trusted the 100% already before the coronavirus but somehow it has just gotten stronger here in the middle of these changes and chaos.”* In this case, the manager felt that even though the situation caused huge revolutionary changes, the employees were loyal, flexible and did not act negatively on the changes happening, which is why the manager gained even more trust towards them.

However, we also found out high change resistance to telecommuting especially because of employees' personal preferences or abilities. As one of the managers noted: *“people were quite terrified”* because they had been used to working at the office. For this manager it was especially the older employees who did not want to telecommute under any circumstances. In this organization, employees could choose whether they worked at the office or not which eased the manager's job. However, if the whole organization would have been forced to work from home, it could have affected the manager-employee trust.

Even though the coronavirus as a crisis was seen in a highly negative light all together, there were still some positive things especially related to the telecommuting. Employees had expressed that they experienced positively for example the decrease in commuting, time saving reasons and family-related aspects. Some of the positive aspects that emerged during the remote work for the manager were on the other hand the decrease in commuting time and money, increased performance because of less interruptions, added variety in workdays, increased locational possibilities, increased variety of working methods and much more. Since the managers saw positive outcomes from working at home either themselves or from the employees' perspective, it affects positively on their overall attitude towards remote work.

This may be one of the reason why most of the managers did not experience decrease in trust towards the employees: if they witnessed themselves for example an increase in productivity at home, it is easier for them to trust that the employees are feeling the same way. On the other hand, if the manager did not enjoy remote work him-/herself because of for example decreased communication with the employees or lack of information, this may affect negatively to their overall attitude towards telecommuting. However, negativity over telecommuting did not necessarily mean decrease in trust during remote work since there were instances where the manager would have preferred working at the office but still had no distrust towards the employees telecommuting.

6.4 Organizational factors in the situation affecting to trust development

Not only did the individual attitudes and change resistance affect the situation, but the organizations and their differences can also have effect on how the trust develops between a manager and an employee. One aspect that could be seen as a promoter for the managers' increase in trust during the telecommuting time under crisis was the witnessed group spirit. One of the managers witnessed that during the telecommuting time, he/she could more clearly feel and see that the work community was supportive and active in for example helping others. So, in this light, the crisis can be seen as a situation where the work community felt to be in the situation together and the sense of communality rose resulting the manager to gain more trust, not necessarily towards specific employees but for the organization as a whole. Other organizational factors

that affected to the manager-employee trust were related to centralization of authorities and hierarchy of the organizations.

6.4.1 Centralization of authorities

According to Mishra (1996), the more managers trust their employees, the more they are willing to let them make decisions during the crisis. This way the negative effects of the centralization of authority can be diminished. In our research, we found no evidence that the managers would have wanted to make more decisions themselves rather than let employees make them. As one of the managers stated: *“my employees have a strong freedom (over their work) and the same freedom stayed onwards (during the crisis)”*. So, related to employees’ day-to-day work and how they conduct their job, there was no changes seen because of the crisis. Boin and Hart (2003) highlight that even though it is usual that the authorities are centralized in a crisis situation, it is vital for organizations to let lower levels of hierarchy to make decisions even more during the crisis time. For managers to be able to let the employees make decisions, they need trust for. Our research shows that the trust was in place for the managers to let employees make the same decisions they have always made regarding the conducting of their work.

However, as crisis literature suggests, on an organizational level, crises tend to centralize authorities resulting group think, rigid responses, and inappropriate rules for decisions (Nunamaker et al., 1989). In our research, we found out clearly that the decisions related to the crisis came from higher levels of authority. As one of the manager noted: *“in the middle of March, it came from national level that all will move to telecommuting and there was no discussion”*. Because of this, the managers, in many ways saw themselves more as an employee of the company or organization rather than the leader. This can be clearly seen from the use of “we” or “us” when talking about the changes that had to be made during the crisis. One of the managers pointed out about the increase in smaller decisions:

“Decisions related to the coronavirus came from the headquarters, that’s it. Of course, there came small decisions during the crisis, but they were not necessarily related to the coronavirus.”

These “small decisions” that the manager was referring to, based on our understanding, are the decisions related to the telecommuting and its arrangements. Regarding the actual practicalities and how the work will be conducted remotely, it seems that the employees’ decision making did not change but the managers decision making increased, which is natural considering the amount of changes the organizations went through especially in the beginning of the crisis.

Because many of the coronavirus related decisions, restrictions and recommendations came higher in the organization, the inappropriate rules for decisions could be seen clearly in our research. There could be seen difficulties among the managers because of, as one of them expressed, being “*stuck between the rock and a hard place*”. By this, they meant that they experienced challenges since decision were coming from above their authority but at the same time other stakeholders may have put pressure on the manager to make decisions, they were not authorized to make under the crisis situation, or the decisions were not appropriate from the managers’ opinion in the situation of their organization. First of all, the decisions given from the top management may have been inadequate: “*At the beginning we did not get clear instructions on how certain things should be organized.*”. Also, there could be seen that the top management wanted to control the situation while the interviewee suggested that all departments could have made the decision themselves offering a better autonomy for the work and thus better satisfaction:

“I would have given much looser instructions to my employees, if my manager would have been so close by or giving the orders. So, if you ask me, I would have been much looser”.

Clearly, there could be seen frustration and unsatisfaction because of the centralization of authorities. The managers in many cases would have wanted to make the decisions themselves, but on the other hand, if we look into the manager-employee trust relationship, the centralization of authorities might have affected positively on it. One of the manager told a situation where he/she did not agree on the decisions, the top management had done:

“I have been on my employees’ side about the continuity of remote work: a high telecommuting recommendation was put in place, but our top management team was not agreeing to this, so I had quite intense conversations with my manager about it and told our opinion (manager and his/her employees).”

In this case, the centralization of authorities caused inferior decisions related to telecommuting from the manager’s point of view which resulted the manager to fight for the employees. For the manager to stand up for continuity of telecommuting, he/she showed that he/she had no problem with employees working from home, which communicates to the employees that they are trusted, and the manager does not need to control their work from the office. At the same time employees could see that the manager stood up for them, which may have had positive impact to the trust the employees felt towards the manager.

In the uncertain crisis situation, previous literature suggests that risk taking, and vulnerability are higher, which has been seen as the link to highlighted need for trust but also highlighted effect on trust that the situation brings (Powley & Nissen, 2012). According to our findings, the risk taking, however was not visible in the managers decisions as much as it was higher up in hierarchy where the rules, restrictions and instructions were made. It seems that the managers were able to “go with the flow” rather than be in the center of risky decision making. Because of this, it can be that the crisis did not have such a strong effect on the trust relationships between the managers and the employees, but it was more the remote work arrangements that were related to the changes that the managers experienced in their manager-employee trust relationships.

6.4.2 Hierarchy

There were organizations that had lower and higher hierarchies in our study. The differences we found related to the hierarchy cannot be fully evaluated but there are some notions we wanted to bring out. There was one organization that had stronger hierarchy than the others. This could be seen from the fact that according to the manager, the decision-making was structured and there were certain rules that needed to be followed and certain aspects that could be decided on certain levels of the

hierarchy. For this manager, the importance of trust towards the employees seemed not to be as important as it was for others. In their organization, the performance was measured with specific statistics and the manager-employee relationship seemed lie on the basis of formal reporting and statistics. Few organizations on the other hand had weaker hierarchy downwards and stronger hierarchy upwards:

“At our office level I have a lot of authority and decision-making power, but some things just come from above and we have to live with them.”

Powley and Nissen (2012) found out that hierarchy (flexibility of the organization) had effect on how manager-employee trust affected the crisis management and its results. They found out that the more flexibility the organization had, the more magnitude trust had in the performance of the organization in a crisis situation. The magnitude could be seen to both directions: if the organization had low trust, it had more serious effects to the performance of the organization compared to a low trust - high hierarchy organization. High trust on the other hand created more positive effects to the organization in a low hierarchy versus high hierarchy organization.

In our results we cannot fully compare to Powley and Nissen's results since we cannot measure the performance of the organization. However, we can see similarities in our results. As stated, the manager that worked in strong hierarchy company, did not bring up trust issues or trust building aspects as much as the others did which could be because of the strong hierarchy and the interpersonal trust was not as needed because of stricter customs and rules. For the managers in lower hierarchies, they on the other hand gave a lot of emphasis on how important for example trust building in the beginning of the relationship is. So, in light of this, it can be that even though the manager in stronger hierarchy organization witnessed distrust, it did not affect the overall performance of the organization. For the managers with lower hierarchy, trust played a bigger role which means that for them the situation of crisis and telecommuting put the trust into more vulnerable place.

One interesting thing related to the hierarchy that we found out in our research was the changes in the speed of decision making. For one manager, he/she experienced that decision making got a lot faster because of the crisis and the communication between

the top management and lower levels of hierarchy run faster. Another manager on the other hand experienced a slower pace in decision making higher in the hierarchy. But in this case, it was not the crisis-related decisions but other, “not as crucial things” that were left behind the more acute crisis decision. However, for this manager, these matters were highly important and also crucial, since they affected his/her department especially but because of the centralization of authorities during the crisis, the decision makers had no resources to handle all decisions necessary, and this thus created frustration among the managers.

6.5 Communication

“The communication is even more important than in normal working life.” This was a phrase that round up the managers’ experiences in our research. As we anticipated based on the theoretical framework, the importance of communication really highlighted during telecommuting in a crisis. Actually, it even surprised, how much value the managers gave to it, and how much it affected in different situations. Not only did the computer mediated communication bring in both challenges and possibilities but the managers also experienced changes in communication openness and frequency. As existing literature suggests, communication has been seen to be in the key element in building and maintaining trust (James & Wooten, 2005). This was also seen in our research since whether the manager experienced increase in trust or decrease in it, communication was related to the change.

6.5.1 Computer-mediated communication

As research suggests managers may have doubts on whether the media used in remote working is enough so that the communication quality does not suffer. This problem has been analyzed with the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), which is a theory that explains how communicator should choose the type of media based on the goal of the message. There have been contradictory results on whether computer-mediated communication can be enough to build and maintain trust. Especially the use of text-based computer-based communication has gotten critique over its poor quality and thus making the trust building challenging (Bos, Olson, Gergle, Olson, & Wright, 2002).

Our research seems to be in line with the ideas that text-based communication has downsides. One of the managers said that more communication could have been needed with the telecommuters but *“not just with email but there has to be more than that”*. Another manager on the other hand pointed out the same as Järvenpää and Leidner (1999) found out that when communicating via text form, there can be cues that are missed and one needs to be more careful with how you write the text:

“When you’re talking on the phone or face-to-face one can patch up the misunderstandings but when you’re writing, you really need to think what you are writing. It can be so delicate and also the fact that the email can then be forwarded to people that it doesn’t belong to...So yes, people did get stuck on those (word-choices etc.) now more easily.”

So, as we can see, especially the communication media with lower richness can indeed hamper the communication quality and thus result in misunderstandings and wavering of the trust relationship between the manager and the employee especially in a situation where the message is important, and the risk of misunderstanding may hamper the relationship of the manager and the employee. However, as media richness theory suggests, text-based communication has its place if the message suits the nature of the media, which can also be seen in the results of our study, since one manager experienced text form media as one of the key elements in the success of the telecommuting time:

“WhatsApp group that we (with employees) started up right in the beginning (of the remote work) has been totally invaluable. When, for example someone had technical problems, others could help. So, it has been great in just getting things forward but also it has been a great channel to just send some silly things especially during the spring when we didn’t see.”

Bos et al. (2002) explain that text-based computer mediated communication, for example email may difficult the development and maintaining of trust because of the feelings of social distance and misunderstandings. As we see in our results, text-based communication can make it the manager more vulnerable to misunderstandings when it comes to important work-related communication. On the other hand, text-based

communication did have an important role for another manager in the maintenance of group spirit and quick day-to-day communication. When the manager is part of the group spirit building, they are part of creating the strong relationships with the employees. Also, by being part of this kind of chat, they could be part of the information flow. However, we were not able to see straight influence of the text-based communication on manager-employee trust, which suggests that the use of text-based communication puts the trust in a vulnerable place to misunderstandings, but used in a right way, it should not affect to manager-employee trust in a negative way.

Other managers on the other hand preferred a richer communication medium, such as video or audio calls with the employees and thought them as an important tool in maintaining a good quality communication and relationship quality. One manager found the telecommuting time extremely great for one-to-one relationship building because there were more one-to-one time and *“the communication was deeper with them (telecommuters)”*. For this manager, they were able to communicate on a deeper level, which can be a reason for the trust relationships with the employees to strengthen. While one-to-one audio calls were helping the manager to maintain relationships with the employees, also communication with the whole organization via audio calls were seen beneficial:

“It was a positive thing and actually rather important that everyone was online at the same time via Google Meet. Yes, we had work related subjects, but we could also talk other stuff so that we laughed and had those social contacts.”

In their study Bos et al. (2002) did not find any significant difference in audio versus video media. However, our findings there can be seen differences in audio versus video calls, since some managers preferred video calls over audio calls and there was even experienced decrease in trust because the lack of visible contact. One manager explained that he/she would prefer a camera on when talking online even though they did not use them on a daily basis because *“it’s just nicer this way”* (in the interview we had cameras on). He/she did not experience distrust because of the cameras not being open but for him/her it was just a preference related to the social interactions with the employees, which could be related to him/her wanting to develop their

relationship. Another manager on the other hand seemed to experience some distrust during communication without a visible contact with the employee:

“One thing was that I wasn’t always certain if the employee is concentrating or if he/she is doing something else at the same time... that if they for example keep their phones open or something like that. One cannot completely see if the message fully sinks in for the employee. It’s different when you are face-to-face, then you can really see if they register everything but now one cannot fully know it.”

So, when it came to important information sharing or instructions, there is evidence that some managers prefer either face-to-face or at least computer-mediated communication with visible contact because they could not trust the employee to listen properly without visible confirmation. In light of these findings, the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) seems to be still relevant to some extent. There have been findings that nowadays computer-mediated communication can replace face-to-face communication and it can be used to build trust between the manager and the employee (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). However, as witnessed in the last case, especially communication without visible confirmation can have negative impact on manager-employee trust. It did not come clear in the interviewee why the manager felt distrust in the situation, but we can conclude that if the meeting would have been face-to-face, this lack of trust would not have been present.

Because the coronavirus forced people to avoid face-to-face contacts, it may have an effect on the people’s attitude towards the computer-mediated communication. None of the managers felt the need to see employees more face-to-face (even the one that had doubts on employee listening properly in audio call), and one manager explained that when the restrictions were stronger in the spring *“it was clearer that the office is now closed, and we are not seeing each other as an organization”*. So, the pandemic may be a reason why face-to-face communication was not felt to be needed more; because people accepted the computer-mediated communication better than in a situation where face-to-face contacts would have been more acceptable or even possible. This could affect the managers overall experiences on computer-based communication, that it could be used to communicate with good quality and actually be beneficial for their manager-employee trust.

6.5.2 Openness, frequency, honesty

When looking into the aspects of communication that has been seen to have an effect to the trust-relationship of two parties, it seems that the frequency of the communication was the one that stood up and affected the most to the managers. Openness was also brought up, but more as a principle while honesty is something that did not emerge in the interviews of this research.

The frequency of the communication is one of the three building blocks in a communication that nurtures trust between the two parties (James & Wooten, 2005). At the same time, research has shown that remote setting may have negative effects on the frequency of communication which thus suggests that the trust development is more difficult in a remote setting (Allen et al., 2015). In our research we could see that the frequency of the communication got hit especially in a situation when some of the employees were at home while some were at the office:

“Of course, those who were working remotely got less attention, compared to the ones at the office... I don’t think that all of them even thought that I would have been in contact with them every day. But some of them have that kind of personality that they would have wanted a more frequent attention.”

The telecommuting seemed to be the main reason for the decreased frequency in communication. Reasons for this were the increase in workload and the actual absence of co-location, which was seen as a natural reason for normal day-to-day interactions to decrease. Also, the actual crisis had its effects on the frequency of communication between the people working at the office:

“Yes, of course the interactions decreased compared to normal...especially when we tried to keep safety distance and there were recommendations for coffee breaks to have as minimum amount of people as possible... So, of course it decreases the interactions”

On the other hand, while telecommuting resulted a decrease in communication, at the same time there were managers that experienced an increase in communication

because of the crisis: “yes, yes, yes, it (*communication*) has increased a lot”. But what seems to be the form of communication that got more frequent was the top-down vertical communication from the managers and also from higher on the hierarchy. Especially for the managers that had a larger entity with other stakeholders too, they experienced that “*the communication has really highlighted...from one direction to another*”. However, we did not find any significant evidence that this crisis-related increase in communication affected in any way the manager-employee trust relationship or that the existing trust would have affected it. On the contrary, telecommuting-related decrease in communication seemed to play a role in the maintenance of the interpersonal relationships within the organization which may have affected the manager-employee trust as well.

Not only did the communication and interactions decrease during the experiences of remote work under crisis, but also the maintenance of frequent communication was seen to be one of the biggest challenges from the managers’ perspective. The managers explained that when before the communication came naturally during lunch and coffee breaks, “*now I really have to think, when could be that kind of gap that I could have time to call and actually could really talk to the employees.*” Another manager on the other hand explained that giving attention to the employees was extremely challenging in a remote setting and as the manager phrased it: “*if everyone would have been at the office, it would have been easier to see what’s going on and how the employees are feeling and what is their well-being*”. For one manager, the maintenance of interpersonal relationships on the other hand felt challenging because “*in Microsoft Teams, there is no time to stay and chat*”.

There is previous evidence that the degree of trust and the frequency of communication may have some correlation between them (Wells & Kipnis, 2001). The existing literature suggests that strong trust relationship can patch up the decreased frequency in communication so that it does not affect negatively on the relationship or the functioning of the work (Golden & Raghuram, 2010). On the other hand, with the situation being delicate in regarding both telecommuting and the crisis, the frequency of communication raises its importance regarding not only the flow of important information but also the maintenance of the interpersonal relationships. If there is lack of trust between the manager and the employee, the decrease in frequency of

communication, could thus make it even more difficult to build the trust towards the employees. On the other hand, if there is a strong trust relationship between the two parties, the manager may not need the frequent communication to control or manage the work of the employees, which was something we witnessed during the interviews.

The differences why managers communicated with some employees more than with others were described with the perceived preferences or abilities of the employees and there was no evidence that trust would have been a reason for the communication frequency. One manager explained that *“all of them are personalities, and everyone doesn’t care about the chit-chat”* while another manager explained the differences with that *“it depends on the competence of the employee and his/her own employees’ skill set whether I interact with them more or less”*. The second manager could be referring to increased control for the employees with less competences which is related to the trust towards the employee. But the manager did not explicitly express distrust towards these employees, but he/she referred to giving these employees more support rather than controlling them.

Regarding the openness of the communication, as other researchers have pointed out, trust towards the other person increases open communication, and similarly open communication increases trust. In our research, the managers widely experienced open communication between them and their employees which suggests that the trust relationships were strong at that point and that it could even strengthen if the open communication could be maintained during the situation. One aspect that came up during the interviews was the importance of openness and how it plays a crucial role in a working relationship between the manager and the employee. As one interviewee stated:

“I have tried to highlight that one (employee) has to come and say if something is wrong – I don’t necessarily see it but instead I have to be informed of it”

So here the manager realized that they did not know without seeing or saying how things are working and if there is something bothering the employee but highlights the open communication and has tried to say it to the employees too. This open

communication resulted another manager to gain more trust in their employee and at the same time be more convinced about the trust from the employee towards them:

“Just a while ago I talked with an employee of mine, from his/her request, that how he/she is holding up here at work, and I think that that indicates trust...and that people (employees) can just walk into my office and ask if I have a moment for them to talk with.”

When the managers believed that the employees would reach out if they have problems, it made it easier for the manager to trust the employees. One of the managers explained this with the history-based trust and foundation of the relationship: *“We have a well-formed relationship that all the employees will quite quickly come and say if they have something on their chest.”*

In our interviews, we could not find straight references related to openness related to the situation under investigation. Also, the aspect of honesty did not raise as a concern in any of the interviews, which suggests that the managers believed the communication to be honest from both sides, and the situation did not have an effect on it. Regarding the openness, these quotations above, were something that the managers had experienced before the crisis but when it came to the crisis time, the most dominant theme was the frequency of the communication and the information flow, as we will go through next. We believe that the open communication that has been seen to one of the building blocks in trust building, is in our research referred to information flow. Powley and Nissen (2012) found out that managers handling of the uncertainty and stress during a crisis situation was eased because of trust between them and their employees. That was because the trust that the employees experience, enhances employees' information sharing towards the manager. This information flow can also be understood as open communication, which the managers also referred to as well, when they talked about sharing information. That is why we believe the openness of communication, that could not be straight located from the data, is highly connected to the information flow.

6.5.3 Information flow

In our findings, the information flow during the telecommuting time differed between the managers and it seems that the amount of communication was the mediator that created these differences. One manager explained that they took a video meeting every other day “*whether we had anything to say or not*” and this was an important factor in the flow of information during the remote working period:

“We arranged a slot so that we had interaction and communication with each other. And during that I think that the information run through better than in the office. And now that we have again been at the office, I have noticed that we have taken backtrack in it.”

The key in this situation was that every member of the organization was present at the same time and there could not be any smaller groups sharing information and even making decisions, as the manager explained the situation to be at the office. But instead “*everyone was in their own little home cubicles and online at the same time, so thoughts were exchanged while everyone was present*”. In addition to this, as the manager pointed out, the information flow actually suffered from going back to the office. This suggests that while at the office, people do not include everyone in the conversations, which is of course natural, at home, people could speak openly, and everyone got the information.

However, we could see also negative effects of remote work to information flow. First of all, as few managers noted, the meetings via computer-mediated communication are more compact and “the subjects do not meander”. This means that when previously the meetings could take a side-track, there were more ideas and knowledge shared during the meetings, but with computer-mediated communication, as one manager expressed, “*meetings were more compact*”. While this effect was seen positive regarding time management, there is a possibility that information was not shared as much because of it. In addition to this, one manager expressed difficulties with keeping track of the situation and getting the information needed during telecommuting:

“(While telecommuting) I wasn’t able to get the big picture of the situation that where are we with our work and if we are going to get everything done...there should’ve been more planning with that. And a lot of “good to know” information was left out when people wasn’t present.”

So, there was clear signs of information not flowing on an adequate level and the manager felt uncertain over the situation and would have needed more control over it. However, at some point the manager was able to get a weekly meeting running which affected to the information flow dramatically:

“The weekly meeting thing was huge, and it was so important that when we talk about work stuff, everyone gets the information that is not perhaps necessary but still good to know.”

The reasons for these differences in information flow can be explained with the trust within the organization. According to Alexopoulos and Buckley (2013), trust plays an essential role in information sharing in a way that the more trust the employees and managers have, the more willing they are to share their knowledge. There was clear evidence in our research with one manager that the trust was not strong enough between the manager and all of the employees since while the manager struggled with getting the information needed, he/she also pointed out that *“there were challenges in how much they wanted to show their work to me. Some of the employees did not want to give the information that belonged to me”*. So, in addition to the remote setting posing extra difficulties with the communication frequency and information flow, the low trust between the manager and the employees made it even more challenging for the manager to do their job in addition to managing the crisis.

As the theoretical framework suggests, trust nurtures trust, and in this case, it means that the more information is shared and communication is open and honest, it increases the trust between the two parties. So, in our research, we can see that the first manager was able to get an environment of communication and sufficient information flow, because of collective, open communication, which is a consequence of good trust relationships within the organization while the second manager had difficulties with getting the information needed during the telecommuting time, which suggests that the

trust relationships were not as strong. In the case of the second manager, there were signs that he/she had not yet been able to build a foundation of trust that also included the benevolence and integrity of the trustee, but the trust was based on abilities. Because of this, the manager and the employee were still building trust during the crisis, which would have required a highlighted focus on the communication. However, as noted, the manager was able to get the information to flow better, which we see as a turning point for them to continue manager-employee trust relationship building.

6.6 Control

One of the aspects of this research was the trust-control balance and whether the manager is able to handle the natural loss in control because of the absence of co-location. Once again, communication between the manager and the employee was seen to be a key element in manager's way of controlling the employees. For one manager, the control came naturally because *"the communication was needed because we had so many shared customers that we had to communicate...it was necessary"*. With this employee, the manager did not experience any lack in trust before the crisis or during it. One reason could be that by communicating on a regular basis, the manager was able to balance the decrease in control. For the managers who set up weekly meetings or get-togethers online, they were not only a way to get the information needed as a manager, but also it could have been a way to balance the loss of control by not seeing the employees.

However, regarding actual control measures, there were no signs that the managers would have increased or changed their control measures. Normal weekly or monthly meetings continued the same which suggests that the managers did not feel a need for extra control at least through these formal meetings. However, as stated, we have no confirmation whether the informal meetings and calls were also a way to monitor the employees. The managers did not express that they would have needed more reporting from the employees, but the reporting seemed to have an effect on the trust relationship, as we will see in the next subchapter. They however wanted to have some kind of contact with the employees if the employees did not take initiative in contacting

the manager. But we could not see any correlation that the communication from the managers' side would have been because of the need to control the employees.

One of the managers experienced greater productivity at work which is why he/she could pay more attention to the employees than normally. He/she was able to go through the employees' monthly statistics and give feedback more than normal. While the manager expressed that they did this to help the employees, there is a possibility that from the employees' perspective this could be seen as an increase in control from the manager's side and thus employees could feel diminished autonomy because of this, which may have negative effect on the employees' perspective on the trust towards them. However, since we only have the manager's perspective, we cannot tell if the employees suffered from the increased feedback.

All, in all the loss of control was handled well by the managers, which indicates that the managers did not suffer from trust issues in a way that they would have added control measures. As one of the manager stated: *"I had no such feeling that when they (employees) were at home, that I should check something."*

One reason for this good trust-control balance is that the managers seemed to focus on the outcomes of the work when monitoring the employees and explaining the trust between them. In addition, it was not only in telecommuting but according to their interviews, the control measures were already in a normal setting focused on the outcomes rather than processes. They highlighted the fact that it will become visible at some point if the work does not get done at home and if all job tasks are done in time, there was no ground for distrust. For some managers, these outcome measures were statistics while for other the feedback gotten from the clients of the employees. But one way or another *"it would come out"*, as one of the manager concluded.

Related to the managers control and means for controlling the employee, all of the managers in our research described the manager-employee trust with the concept of "stalking". The managers expressed that if the *"job gets done"*, there is no reason why they should interfere with the employees' job:

“Well, let’s say that I don’t stalk them neither at the office nor at home. In my experience, I can trust my employees 100% when they are at home. I have no doubt that they wouldn’t do their job. I can see that the job gets done, so how could I go and say that you have done nothing if things have been done.”

This quotation shows that the manager used the outcomes of the work as the performance measure and because the outcomes were the same whether the employee was at the office or at home, there was no need for the manager to doubt that the work would not be done. Previous literature suggests that high manager-employee trust moves control measures from processes to outcomes, which is one of the key success elements in remote work arrangements (Cascio, 2000). Thus, our findings seem to be in line with the existing literature regarding the outcome measures and that as long as the employee holds their trustworthiness at home by doing their tasks within the same time frames as they would be done at the office, the trust relationship does not suffer from telecommuting.

Existing literature has also pointed out that if the manager is able to cope with the decreased control over the employees’ work at home, by not adding control measures or focusing on the outcomes, research has found out that the employees feel greater sense of autonomy, which is one of the mediators affecting to the success of telecommuting. We are not able to know the employees’ experiences on how they felt the managers’ control on them but at least there could not be found any indications that the employees would have reacted negatively on manager’s actions regarding control.

Existing literature has found out that distrust between a manager and an employee manifests as the need for the manager to get more control over the employee or their doings (Wells & Kipnis, 2001). We pointed out earlier the concern over a manager who had more time at home and stated that *“I probably stare the reports and statistics more when I cannot meet with the employee”*. This concentration to reports and statistics indicates that the manager needed or wanted to control the outcomes of the employees’ job more because of telecommuting. However, he/she did not straight indicate that the trust relationship would have had any effect because of remote work. While we explained that the interviewees did not seem to need extra control during

telecommuting, expect for that one notion, there however were interviewees experiencing stronger kind of distrust but from the top management or from some of the employees towards other employees:

“Few employees did not want to go home at all and went on to me how when people are working from home, they don’t know anything, and they are doing everything wrong.”

These similar experiences of other people’s unwillingness for working from home were witnessed by another manager also, but with the top management of the company. This resulted the management team to set up strict rules on who can telecommute on which days and which of the employees cannot telecommute on the same days. The distrust culminated in a way that even though there were strong telecommuting recommendation on the area, the top management instructed people to come work at the office. So, clearly the notions of distrust affecting to highlighted need for control and the fact that telecommuting does put trust in a more central position cannot be bypassed and there were individuals and organizations suffering from these problems. As the interviewee, with the employees showing distrust explained:

“They had no control...They had no control over what other people were doing. They were used to people coming to ask things from them and being on track with what is happening and then all of a sudden people weren’t there and they got scared. And then there was the thing that they suspected that if people are home, they are not working but doing something else. And if they were in the office, they would have more time to help the rest of us.”

So clearly, few of the employees were having trouble in trusting the other members of the organization and they even insisted the manager to tell employees to come back to the office even though there were strong recommendations from higher levels of hierarchy to utilize telecommuting as a safety measure for the global crisis. These finding suggests that indeed remote work puts the trust into test and distrust in that situation may have extremely fatal results, especially if it is manager-employee relationship. If there is a lack of trust between the members of the organization, it can

be seen from these fears and uncertainties and from the attempt to get more control over the employees by prohibiting remote work or adding control measures.

6.6.1 Monitoring of working hours

Monitoring of time has been seen as a problem in telecommuting situations, since the manager is not able to see the process of work or how the employees are using their time (Schneider-Borowicz, 2003). That is why existing research has found out that the best way to balance the trust-control issues that may arise in telecommuting environment is managers “shift from focus on time to focus on results (Cascio, 2000, p. 81). Literature suggests that if the managers, however, use the time-related control measures or especially if they increase it during the remote work, it directly indicates mistrust towards the employee and more importantly indicates to employees that they are not trusted, which may harm the relationship even further. In our findings we found both contradictory and supportive results related to the working hour monitoring since, we found both positive and negative effects to trust because of the use of working hour monitoring as a form of control. We found two positive experiences where the working hour monitoring actually may have had influence in increasing the trust towards the employee:

“With the telecommuters, there comes a time stamp when they are going to lunch, even though I have never said that they should mark the lunch break.”

“I haven’t had to question if they (employees) are out of office, that they wouldn’t clock out correctly or be otherwise conscientious regarding the time stamps...the biggest reason is their (employees’) own personal conscientiousness, because there is no such demand that they should inform such things, but it is just their own will.”

While Cascio (2000) states that “in telework-relationship, time is not important”, referring to controlling the employees from time perspective, our results suggest that time is important, though a bit differently than Cascio explained. When the employees clocked themselves in and out accurately by informing about lunch breaks and times when they left the workstation to pick up for example children from school, the managers experienced that the employees were trustworthy. The employees’ own

willingness to inform and keep the manager up to date resulted the managers to gain confidence over the employees and their trustworthiness related to benevolence and integrity and that they are doing their job properly.

On the other hand, there were also one manager who experienced the problems that Kurland and Cooper (2002, p. 109) states as one of the difficulties in remote management: “If I can’t see my employees, how do I know they’re working?”. The manager experienced a decrease in trust towards an employee especially because of his/her working hours got higher when they were working from home. In this case the manager was not able to see the actual stamps because he/she was not the one controlling them, but he/she got third-hand information on the increase in overtime hours. This “*lack of concrete knowledge*” as the manager expressed the overtime situation was harmful for the manager since he/she could not be certain on how the employee is using their time and why the overtime piles up. In this case, the employee’s trustworthiness decreased because the manager was not certain if the employee was using time at home inefficiently or if they truly had so much work at home that the overtime was real.

Managers referred to working hour monitoring as one of the key elements in both controlling but also trusting the employees, so it was a tool for balancing the trust-control relationship of the remote setting. Our findings suggest that with employees who have trustworthiness in the eyes of the manager by being precise with the working hour monitoring, the managers will have no harm in monitoring the working hours of the telecommuter and will actually be beneficial in increasing the trustworthiness of the employee. On the other hand, we found out that for employees raising doubts of their trustworthiness, monitoring the hours actually resulted the manager to trust the employee less because of the telecommuting.

As we can see from the results of the study, the development of manager-employee trust is not a straight-forward process, but it has multiple factors that construct the manager’s overall perceived trust towards the employee. As witnessed above, the development of trust begins from a strong pre-crisis trust. With the strong pre-crisis trust the manager is able to ease the time scarcity and uncertainty that is related to the crisis punctuation. After that employee’s trustworthiness is in the center of how the

manager is able to trust the other person, which is also affected by the organizational factors, mainly the centralization of authorities. Computer-mediated communication, as witnessed is in the center during the remote work and plays an important role in the trust development. Lastly, the strength of manager-employee trust is also in correlation with the control measures used under remote work.

7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to understand, how the exceptional situation of wide telecommunication during crisis affects to managers' work and especially what kind of role manager-employee trust plays in it. The situation studied was the pandemic, coronavirus that in the early 2020 turned the world upside down and forced organizations to start remote working, also known as telecommuting. There was a situation where organizations used to work together in the same office or building, were suddenly moved to working from home while the pandemic brought another dimension to the situation.

After familiarizing with the research on telecommuting and crises, we found a common theme, trust, that seemed to be central for both phenomena. However, at the same time we were astonished by the way trust-related issues and dimensions were left widely unresearched. Also, the fact that especially telecommuting research has widely focused on the individual employees and not the manager's perspective, we found a clear research gap that we wanted to shed light into.

In this last chapter, we will first summarize the main findings of the research after which we will give ideas on how these findings can be used in practice. We will end this paper with estimating the reliability, validity, and limitations of this study, after which suggestions for further research are given.

7.1 Summary of main findings

The framework we built earlier included the process of trust development where the first focus is on the pre-crisis trust conditions. After the crisis punctuation, the trust constructs of the manager's and employee's interactions through communication, while the organizational factors can also play a role in the situation. The idea of "trust nurtures trust" was included in the framework to emphasize the constructional view of the trust development. The goal of the theoretical framework was to give the basis for our analysis where we could then find the main themes that we found out to be highlighted in our research. To summarize our main findings, we combined the theoretical framework with our own results and created the figure 8 to visualize our

findings. Based on our analysis, we found six main themes (marked with the blue color) that had the most effect on the manager-employee trust relationship. We also used bolding and fading to highlight the factors that stood up in our research and that did not play as an important role.

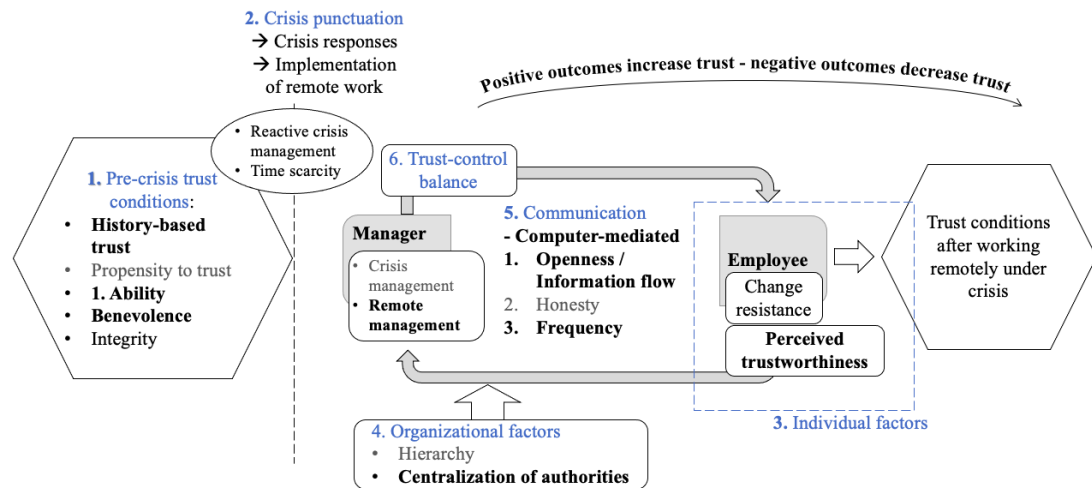


Figure 8. The development of manager-employee trust during a crisis in remote work.

Based on our findings we will now answer the research question where we will more closely explain the figure 8 above.

How does manager's perceived trust towards the employee develop in a remote setting during a crisis?

The manager-employee trust strengthens over time, but however, the main notion here is that the length of the relationship does not build the strong trust, but it is the *positive* outcomes that cumulate and create a strong trust-relationship. The main aspects of trust that the manager builds the employees trustworthiness on begin from abilities. Only after the manager is convinced that the employee has abilities, benevolence and integrity of the employee start to deepen the trust relationship, which of benevolence was seen more dominant than integrity. All in all, if the existing trust is on a level that all the dimensions of trust have been established before the crisis punctuation, the negative effects that the crisis remote situation may have. However, the pre-crisis trust relationship does not define how the trust will develop during the situation, but both

the employee and the manager play a crucial role in how the trust can be maintained and developed during telecommuting under crisis situation.

The crisis punctuation creates revolutionary changes to the organization which results both organizational, such as the implementation of remote work, and individual responses, such as feelings of uncertainty, frustration, and stress. Special characteristics related to the coronavirus were that the crisis management was almost only reactive, and the time scarcity of the situation was high, which have been brought up in the figure 8. However, if the crisis is external and sudden, like the coronavirus was, the manager-employee trust does not suffer because the lack of proactive crisis management and time scarcity.

During the remote work under crisis, the individual factors of the manager and the employee that have the most effect during the situation are more focused on the employee's side, mainly their trustworthiness. If the manager is convinced of the employee's trustworthiness during the remote work under crisis, there is no evidence that the other factors of the situation would affect negatively on the development of trust. In other words, the basic idea of a trust relationships between two parties is not affected by the situation. However, during remote work, dimensions of benevolence and integrity have more effect than the abilities of the employee in the perceived trustworthiness.

Our findings suggest that during crisis authorities become centralized and decision making regarding the crisis is done higher up on the hierarchy. That means that the middle-level managers do not make crisis related decisions, which is why they do not have such a big role in crisis management and thus the manager-employee trust is not in as vulnerable stage as it would be if the manager is not the decision maker of the crisis. This is also the reason, why in a remote crisis situation, manager-employee trust is more affected by the remote work rather than the crisis itself.

The communication between the manager and the employee is strongly related to the strength of their trust relationship. If the pre-crisis trust is not on a strong base, the situation makes the building of manager-employee trust relationship even harder, because the information may not flow properly in a remote setting, communication is

not frequent enough or the computer-mediated communication does not keep the quality of the communication high enough. All of these negative outcomes that are present in telecommuting under crisis decrease the manager-employee trust. On the other hand, if the manager and employee are able to create positive outcomes during the situation, trust increases. because the decrease in frequency of communication, information flow and the quality of the communication because of computer-mediation do not have as negative effects as if they had in a situation where trust was not as strong or was based on for example only the abilities of the employee.

Manager's perceived trust towards the employee is in direct correlation with the manager's control measures. If the manager is not able to trust the employee under telecommuting arrangement, they try to balance the lack of trust with excess control measures, which may be difficult explicitly because of the remote work. This lack of both trust and control decreases the manager-employee trust. Manager with strong trust towards the employee is on the other hand able to balance the decreased ability to control with trust and thus is able to increase the trust-relationship by trusting the employee even when control towards them decreases. In addition to that, controlling the working hours of an employee can either increase or decrease the manager-employee trust depending on the manager's perceived trustworthiness of the employee.

This study contributes to the existing literature by bringing the research fields of crisis and telecommuting together regarding the parts of manager-employee trust and its development from the manager's point of view. We support the idea of the importance of trust building before the crisis or remote work as well as the communicational difficulties the remote work brings to the development of manager's trust towards the employee. In addition to this, Mishra's (1996) notion of trust being both a cause and a consequence for crisis behavior can be supported according to our findings. Existing research suggests that if employees can show the managers their trustworthiness by for example showing increase in abilities, benevolence or integrity, the trust towards the employee increases (Mayer et al., 1995). Our findings support this notion of processual perceived trustworthiness (Mishra, 1996) which continues to highlight in a remote crisis situation even more.

All the findings of our research did not support the views of previous literature. The emphasis of crisis management and negative effects of both organizational and individual crisis responses did not play as big of a role as expected because of the centralization of authorities. Also, we did not find any correlation between the hierarchy of the organization and the manager-employee trust. In addition to that, regarding the history-based trust, the length of the relationship is not a guarantee of a strong trust, but the number of positive encounters is in the key element in it, which should be emphasized. Regarding the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), we found out that computer-mediated communication can be enough to maintain and even increase manager-employee trust during remote work.

7.2 Managerial implications

There are a lot of findings and learnings, this study provides to organizational life, especially for the managers to utilize. First of all, this study gives a deeper understanding of the perspective of the manager in a telecommuting relationship which has not been brought up as much as the employees' side of the situation. In a remote work situation, the communication is the key element for the success of the relationship. That is why managers should focus on open and frequent communication with the telecommuters in order to provide and receive sufficient information flow. In addition to that, with communication, managers are able to balance the lack of control they may witness with the remote workers because of the absence of visible contact. The maintenance and development of trust relationship during remote work happens through computer-mediated communication, which the manager should try to keep as frequent, honest, and open as possible as stated earlier. However, text-based communication may not be enough to build the trust while audio and video calls on the other hand can be used to keep the trust relationship thriving even without face-to-face contacts.

Another point to raise up is that managers should focus on building a deep trust-relationship with the employees before any revolutionary changes, or before remote work arrangement because during such changes, the development of trust may be extremely difficult, and the outcomes of the situation may hamper because there has not been trust between the manager and the employee. The manager should

acknowledge that deep trust-relationship does not only include the belief of employees' abilities to conduct the work but especially in a remote setting, the dimensions of benevolence and integrity are the ones that can keep the trust-relationship strong even during telecommuting arrangements.

Regarding the crisis, managers should understand that the manager-employee trust relationship is in more vulnerable stage for the managers that have to make the difficult decision regarding the crisis. For especially these decision makers, trust development before the crisis is essential in order for the organization to implement and accept the new revolutionary changes and strategies of the organization. All in all, it is important to understand that the deeper the manager's and employee's trust relationship is, the easier the maintenance of it is during telecommuting time under crisis, and the less negative effects these situations bring to both the manager and the employee as well as for the whole organization.

7.3 Reliability, validity, and limitation of the study

This study poses limitations that have to be taken into consideration together with the reliability and validity of the research. Even though reliability and validity are more discussed in quantitative studies and have not gotten as much attention in qualitative studies (Klenke, 2015, p. 37), still they should be discussed to understand the limitations, this study has.

The sampling methods of the data collection poses limitations to validity and reliability. As Flick (2018, p. 89) states, sample size should go hand in hand with the heterogeneity of the population which means that the more heterogeneous the population is, the bigger the sample size should be in order for the sample to be as representative as possible. Because the coronavirus touched upon the whole society and managers around the world had a situation of managing employees during a crisis remotely, we can assume the population to be very heterogeneous. That is why we have to take into consideration that because the sample size was only six managers and for example the age range was only from 50 to 60, this research does not necessarily provide results that could be generalizable for the whole population study, which in the case of qualitative research is not the goal of the study at the first place (Sarajärvi

& Tuomi, 2018). However, this decreases the external validity of the research, meaning that how transferable the results are for other contexts (Klenke, 2015, p. 39).

The adequate number of interviewees is in the qualitative research literature referred to a saturation point (Galletta, 2018; Sarajärvi & Tuomi, 2018). The basic idea of saturation point is that when there comes a situation where the data collected is starting to repeat itself (Sarajärvi & Tuomi, 2018) and it is “no longer producing new thematic patterns (Galletta, 2018, p. 33). However, because of the time and resource restrictions of the study, we were not able to reach the saturation point of all research concerns which also has negative effect on the validity of the results. If more interviewees would have been taken as a source for data collection, we could have been able to gain higher validity for the research. In addition to this, the only form of data was the interviews and the data acquired from them, but with other forms of data, such as documents, could the validity of the study have been higher.

This research used a wide range of existing literature from the fields of crisis and telecommuting as well as organizational trust, which increases the reliability of the results regarding such a novel phenomenon. However, this research was conducted during the time period of May 2020 to March 2021, meaning that by the interviews were done in the beginning of 2021, the coronavirus was still affecting the managers and many of the organizations had continued telecommuting and social distancing. That is why we cannot know the long-term effects of the situation which decreases the reliability of this research. However, since the managers were experiencing the issues related to the research at the same time the interviews were conducted, they were able to remember smaller details than if the interviews would have been conducted later which balances the reliability of the results.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

This research is among the other early-stage studies on coronavirus and its effects on organizations and the whole society. Further research is definitely required in order to fully understand the long-term effects the situation has on different members of the organization. In addition to that, this research took a viewpoint of the situation as a whole and dealt the manager-employee trust on quite a broad level. That is why further

research could take a focus on one of the aspects that emerged in this study, such as the information flow, the employees' trustworthiness or the computer-mediated communication during the situation and give deeper insight on this specific phenomenon.

As we expressed in the limitations of the study, this research only shed light into the perspective of the manager in the remote crisis situation, but the employees' perspective should also be investigated to fully evaluate the relationship of these two parties. A perspective of the employee could especially shed light to the parts that was left uncertain because we were only able to hear the manager's side of the situation. These uncertainties were related to how employees experience manager's control under remote management and how they experience the manager's role in crisis management.

All in all, this paper opened up the unusual situation that the coronavirus caused for the whole society and especially what kind of effects it had on an individual level to organization members. The manager's perceived trust towards an employee is not a straight-forward process but includes aspects that need be studied on an even deeper level, which is why there is a need for more thorough research on the topic especially after the situation has fully passed and it can be evaluated objectively.

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